



Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



فرمان رسول ﷺ

رسول اللہ صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم نے فرمایا اس ذات کی قسم! جس کے ہاتھ میں میری جان ہے اگر تم بھی آخرت کی وہ مشکلات جانتے ہو میں جانتا ہوں تو تم زیادہ روستے اور کہتے۔ (صحیح بخاری، حدیث نمبر 6637)

Barkat Rice Mills (Pvt) Limited

Imran Khan's remarks on NAB law based on lies: Nazeer Tarar

The Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar says PTI Chairman Imran Khan's recent statement regarding the NAB Law amendments is based on lies. The former prime minister and his nexus with the NAB are also responsible for pushing the country into an economic crisis. 80% of the amendments were enacted by Imran Khan through ordinances during his tenure.



Super tax on industries is cruelty: Sh Rashid

Pakistan Awami League Pakistan (AMLPP) leader Sheikh Rashid says the inflation rate has increased by 30 percent and implementing 10 percent fixed tax on industries is a cruelty. Dissident politicians, he said that they have been paid in dollars. Politicians put foundation stones in Gwadar but construction of the projects is never completed. The concern of a poor man is inflation while Shehbaz's concern is Murree Highway.

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SBP challenges FSC's ruling on Riba in SC

Bureau Report

KARACHI: State bank of Pakistan (SBP) on Saturday challenged the ruling of the Federal Shariah Court (FSC) for the abolishment of 'Riba' in the Supreme Court. The petition was filed by Salman Akram Raja on behalf of the central bank. Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Law, Chairman Banking Council and others have been made respondents on the plea. The plea stated that the Federal Sharia Court (FSC) didn't take due consideration of the orders passed by the top court while issuing a judgment on interest. It also stated that the FSC had declared the rules regarding Saving Certificates contrary to Islam and ordered amendments in the rules.

The petition prayed the court to approve the appeal against Shariah Court verdict and that the apex court orders amendments to the FSC April 28 order in the light of issues raised in the appeal. On April 28, three-member FSC comprising Chief Justice Muhammad Noor Maskanzai, Justice Dr Syed Muhammad Anwar and Justice Khadim Hussain M. Sheikh announced its verdict on Riba (interest) based banking system and termed it against the Shariah.

The court accepted the petition and declared that the prohibition of Riba was complete and absolute in its all forms and manifestation according to the Injunctions of Islam in accordance with the Holy Qur'an and Sunnah. "Therefore, for all detailed reasons deliberated on this judgement the charging of any amount in any manner over the principle amount of a loan or debt is Riba which is completely prohibited according to the Holy Qur'an and Sunnah of Holy Prophet (SAW)."

Invincible

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif inspecting the parade at passing out ceremony, Pakistan Naval Academy in Karachi on Saturday.



Photo: PID

Pakistan believes in peaceful co-existence: PM

Says our desire for peace must not be taken as weakness

Bureau Report

KARACHI: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif Saturday said that Pakistan believed in peaceful co-existence and wanted to promote friendly relations as it did not harbour any designs against anyone. Addressing a passing out parade of 117th Midshipman and 25th Short Service Commission course at Pakistan Naval Academy, the prime minister said Pakistan's desire for peace must not be taken as weakness. He said the entire nation was proud of its armed forces for their continuous vigil to foil enemies' designs and rendering huge sacrifices in the fight against terrorism.

He observed that Pakistan navy had been effectively play-

ing its part to the overall deterrence and national security with the available resources.

Lauding the contribution of Pakistan Navy, the prime minister

PM forms committee to oversee MQM-P issues

ter said that it had a legacy of valour and professionalism and expressed the confidence that the newly commissioned cadets would further strengthen that legacy. He underscored that the maritime domain was continuously shifting, mainly due to technological advancement and power re-shuffle globally. Only

those navies would prevail and prove effective that would align with ever evolving geo-strategic spectrum and modern trends of warfare, he added. He said that the three Services had proved their mettle against all threats at the borders. The whole nation paid tributes to all shuhada and their families, who had secured the country against all threats with their ultimate sacrifices, he said, adding the nation saluted them all.

Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi And Chief Minister Sindh Syed Murad Ali Shah also attended the passing out parade. The prime minister said Pakistan was blessed with large coastline which held vast potentials which could be utilized by

further strengthening of the defence capabilities and boosting of the maritime economy. "Pakistan's economic future hinges upon success of CPEC," he said, adding the Gwadar port was its major project. He underscored that Pakistan Navy had even more important role to play in the present age of ever growing blue economy, marine security and strategic defence.

The prime minister said Pakistan Navy with its available resources continued to fulfill and perform well to meet the international obligations, besides countering multiple challenges.

He said equipping Pakistan Navy with the latest technology for safeguarding maritime borders of the country was a priority of the government.

Govt will broaden tax net: Miftah

Vows add real estate brokers, builders, car dealers, salons on tax base

Our Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Finance Minister Miftah Ismail on Saturday said that they would bring in gently millions of shops into the tax net after the government imposed fixed taxes on shops. Taking to Twitter to respond to the criticism that the government has levied massive taxes on large-scale manufacturing and failed to broaden its tax base, Miftah said he had brought jewelers into the net and will bring in all the professionals over the next few months.

"To bring small shopkeepers and jewelers into the net I talked to their associations & did so with their agreements," he said. The finance minister said that he would now bring in real estate brokers, builders, housing society developers, car dealers, restaurants, salons and others in the net.

He however clarified that nothing would be forced and the government will take steps after consultation.

A day earlier, PM Shehbaz Sharif announced a super-tax of 10 percent on large-scale manufacturers and industries in the country in order to address the economic woes of the country. The prime minister while announcing the tough decisions in the wake of the ongoing economic situation said that industries related to steel, cement, sugar, oil and gas, fertilizers, energy and terminal, and textile will face a 10 percent tax. In addition, he said that the super tax will also be imposed on the banking and cigarette sectors.

"Teams will be formed to collect tax after the passage of the budget bill," the prime minister said and added that the tax will be levied for a short period of time.

PTI govt puts state into economic crisis

Mariyum chairs consultative meeting on fake news

Staff Report

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Mariyum Aurangzeb says previous government compromised PTV Sports' rights by signing an illegal agreement with a private media group. Addressing a news conference here on Saturday, she said an Expression of Interest for acquisition and dissemination rights was changed again and again to favor a private media group during PTI government.

The Minister said the said agreement with private media group not only compromised legal procedures for the bid but also sacrificed PTV's economic interest. She vowed that justice will be done and PTV will get

its due rights during her tenure as the matter has been put into FIA notice to initiate an inquiry against the involved persons. Mariyum Aurangzeb said the PTI government which claimed to modernize the Broadcasting world, not only put the state institutions into economic crisis but they also destroyed the existing status of PTV and other institutions.

An important consultative meeting between Minister for Information and Broadcasting Mariyum Aurangzeb and representatives of journalistic organizations begun here Saturday. Redressal of two components of fake news, 'misinformation' and 'disinformation' was being discussed in the meeting.

U-turn

Govt increases tax rates for salaried class

Tax relief announced on June 10 withdrawn

ISLAMABAD: The federal government has reversed its decision to exempt middle-income groups from taxation after it reached an understanding with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for the release of a US\$1 billion tranche. Previously, the government announced in the budget that Rs100 will be charged from those having a personal earning of upto 1.2 million annually.

However, following an understanding reached with the IMF, the government has introduced a slab of Rs600,000 to Rs1.2 million and those part of it will have to pay a 2.5 percent tax on their earnings. On incomes ranging between Rs1.2 million to Rs2.4 million, there will be a fixed tax of Rs 15,000 and an additional 12.5 percent income tax.

Federal government has revised tax rate on the salaried class in a bid to increase revenue in the fiscal year 2022-23. According to the new proposals, the government plans a tax rate of 2.5% for income brackets



of Rs50,000 to Rs100,000. For income earners from Rs100,000 to Rs200,000 on monthly basis, fixed tax of Rs15,000 will be collected and Rs165,000 tax has been proposed on income earners from Rs200,000 to Rs300,000.

Individuals earning between Rs2.4 million and 3.6 million/year would be charged a fixed rate of Rs. 165,000, while people whose taxable income exceeds Rs3.6 million but is below Rs6 million would be charged a fixed rate of Rs405,000 plus 25 percent of the amount exceeding 3.6 million.

Similarly, individuals with an annual income between Rs 6 million and

Rs. 12 million would be charged Rs1 million plus 32.5 percent of the amount exceeding 6 million, and anyone earning more than Rs. 12 million, would be charged taxes of Rs2.9 million plus 35% of the amount exceeding 12 million. Where the taxable income exceeds Rs6,000,000 but does not exceed Rs12,000,000, a fixed rate of Rs1,000,000 plus 32.5 percent of the amount exceeding 6 million. Where the taxable income exceeds Rs12,000,000, the FBR will charge a tax amount of Rs2,900,000 plus 35% of the amount exceeding Rs12,000,000 on a per annum basis..

PC presents PSM's revival plan to cabinet body

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Privatization Commission has presented a plan to revive Pakistan Steel Mills before a cabinet body headed by Finance Minister Miftah Ismail. The chairman presented the roadmap for the restoration of the steel mills along with recommendations that it could be revived with the help of foreign investment. "Modern technology could also be transferred to Pakistan during the restoration process along with multiple job openings," it said.

The committee was briefed on the visit of officials from the Chinese state-owned company Boa Steel to the Pakistan Steel Mills and their interest in investing in the project. "The commercial leasing of the 1229 acres of land owned by steel mills and a jetty are also part of the restoration plan."

The cabinet body welcomed the restoration plan with the finance minister directing the industries, power division, and maritime affairs ministries to resolve concerning issues.

Ch Shujaat rejects Ch Wajahat's allegations

Convenes party's crucial meeting to mend fences among family

GUJRAT/ LAHORE: Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid (PML-Q) Chief Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain on Saturday said that the allegations made by Chaudhry Wajahat Hussain are absurd and he will answer all the questions in front of the people in Gujrat. Responding to Chaudhry Wajahat Hussain's speech in a statement on Twitter, the PML-Q Chief said that Wajahat Hussain has made ridiculous statements while addressing people in their house in Gujrat. "Allegations were made related to Asif Ali Zardari and my sons have been accused of asking for dollars," he said.

He further said that the unanimous candidate of the opposition, Shehbaz Sharif, was voted at his behest, adding that they did not ask for any ministry from anyone. Asif Ali Zardari himself came and congratulated them. Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain explained that he has told his sons to currently remain silent on the matter. I have instructed them to always keep the promise, he said. The former prime minister added that his brother Wajahat Hussain said he would form a new party. "Hundreds of parties have already been formed in Pakistan. What difference will it make with another," he added.

The PML-Q leader further stated that the statement made about Tariq Bashir Cheema was immoral



and based on lies. "I will visit Gujrat in sometime and will tell Chaudhry Wajahat Hussain that which constituency belongs to whom," said Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain. In a last-ditch effort to mend fences among family, PML-Q chief Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain has summoned a meeting of members of his family including Chaudhry Parvez Elahi to decide on supporting PTI or PML-N.

According to sources, at least five meetings have been held to end differences among the family after Parvez Elahi announced support for the PTI and Chaudhry Shujaat extended his backing to PML-N-led federal government. "During the meeting, Parvez Elahi and Chaudhry Wajahat asked Salik Hussain to leave the coalition government so that the party remains intact and pursue the same line," they

said, adding that during the first three meetings, Salik Hussain sought time to leave the government.

In two later meetings, they said that Salik suggested that both the groups should go ahead with separate narratives. "You continue to support Imran Khan while we will support Shehbaz Sharif," the sons of Shujaat suggested however, Moonis Elahi and Parvez Elahi rejected the idea. Soon after the meetings, Asif Zardari also called on Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain and his sons. The sources said that Chaudhry Shujaat has now summoned a meeting to make last-ditch efforts to mend fences among the family and has also directed all of them against commenting on a recent statement from Chaudhry Wajahat. "A crucial meeting is likely to take place in the next two days," they said.

Narrative

Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb addressing a press conference in Islamabad on Saturday.



Photo: Online

Pakistan calls for end to HRs' abuses in IIOJK

Foreign Office rejects India's plan to hold G20-related event in Indian Occupied Kashmir

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Saturday strongly urged the international community to call upon India to end its gross and systematic violations of human rights in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK), revoke its illegal and unilateral actions of 5 August 2019, and free all political prisoners including the true Kashmiri leaders. In response to media queries, the Foreign Office Spokesperson stated, "We have seen news items appearing in the Indian media indicating that the Government of India might be contemplating to hold some G20-related meeting/event in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). Pakistan completely rejects any such attempt by India."

"As is well-known, Jammu and Kashmir is an internationally recognized disputed territory between Pakistan and India. The territory has been under forcible and illegal occupation of India since 1947 and this dispute has remained on the agenda of the United Nations Security Council for over seven decades." He said India was responsible for widespread atrocities and egregious human rights violations in IIOJK. Since India's illegal and unilat-

eral actions of 5 August 2019, Indian occupation forces had killed 639 innocent Kashmiris in extra-judicial murders.

Numerous reports of the UN, including the two commissioned by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in 2018 and 2019, had re-confirmed ongoing Indian atrocities against the Kashmiri people. "Most ominously, India has been seeking to change the demographic structure of the occupied territory in flagrant

Islamabad reiterates that IIOJK is a disputed region

violation of relevant UN Security Council resolutions, international law, and the 4th Geneva Convention."

Contemplating the holding of any G20 related meeting/event in IIOJK, in utter disregard of the globally acknowledged "disputed" status of the territory, was a travesty that the international community



could not accept under any circumstances," he said adding, "It is expected that in case of any such controversial proposal from India, which would be designed to seek international legitimacy for an illegal and tyrannical occupation continuing for over 7 decades, the G20 members will be fully cognizant of the imperatives

of law and justice and would reject it out-right." The Spokesperson said the only way to lasting peace in South Asia was by granting the people of the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir their inalienable right to self-determination as pledged to them in the relevant UN Security Council resolutions.

PA passes a bill for a new LB system: CM Hamza

Says providing equal rights to women, minorities priority of govt

LAHORE: A delegation of EU GSP Plus Monitoring Mission, led by Principal Trade Advisor, Guus Houttuin, called on Punjab Chief Minister Hamza Shahbaz in Lahore on Saturday and discussed the implementation of various conventions on GSP Plus status. Punjab Chief Minister briefed the delegation about the steps taken by the government to implement various conventions on GSP Plus in Pakistan. He said providing equal rights to women and minority communities are a priority of the government. The Chief Minister said Punjab Assembly has passed a bill for a new local body system, in which reserved seats for women, minorities and youth have been increased.

CM Hamza said that Pakistan has bravely fought with terrorism, while he added that there is no way we can let extremism and terrorism affect the country. He said that a peaceful Pakistan is government's aim. Punjab Chief Minister Hamza Shahbaz has announced to provide 12,000 scoot-

ies (motorcycles) to all female teachers, lady polio workers, women health workers and working women of all government and semi-government institutions across the province.

Chief Minister Punjab Hamza Shahbaz Sharif made the announcement while speaking at the floor of the House during the budget session at Aiwan-e-Iqbal. 12 thousand scooters will be given to lady teachers and other women in Punjab," he said. The chief minister also announced restoring Laptop scheme for students across the province.

Besides this, CM Hamza also announced setting up a university in Gujranwala, adding that the Punjab cabinet had given approval to the new local government system. Earlier, it emerged that the first phase of distribution of scooters will be completed between August and November this year. Applications will be accepted from aspiring female employees in August, after which scrutiny will begin.

Textile sector rejects super tax

FAISALABAD: Pakistan Hosiery Manufacturers & Exporters Association (PHMEA) has rejected the government's 10% super tax, claiming it would slow down the economy. The PHMEA representative held a press briefing here where they rejected the PML-N-led government's new policy to impose a 10% super tax on 13 sectors including textile, cement, gas terminals and others.

Chairman PHMEA Kashif Zia said that the textile sector is already paying 29% tax, impose further taxes would damage the sector badly. The interest rate of 13.75% would slow down the economy, he claimed. The PHMEA Chief recommended that the government should bring more people into the tax net rather than imposing more taxes on existing taxpayers.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif announced on Friday a super-tax of 10% on large-scale manufacturers and industries in the country in order to address the economic woes of the country. The prime minister while announcing the tough decisions in the wake of the ongoing economic situation said that industries related to steel, cement, sugar, oil and gas, fertilizers, energy and terminal, and textile will face a 10% tax. In addition, he said that the super tax will also be imposed on the banking and cigarette sectors.

Delimitations

MQM-P to challenge SHC verdict in SC

ISLAMABAD: Muttahida Qoumi Movement Pakistan (MQM-P) has decided to challenge Sindh High Court's (SHC) decision on delimitations in the local body elections in the Supreme Court (SC). According to MQM-P sources, the party has decided to challenge the SHC decision on local body delimitation in the Supreme Court. Sources said that the party officials have started to draft the challenge and would soon register it to the court.

The MQM-P leadership says they have reservations over delimitations and claim that it benefits one particular party. The ECP has not completed the work on voter lists; the party has severe objections over the lists as it contains multiple mistakes and errors, they claim.

The party will probably argue in the SC that the Sindh government has not implemented their decision regarding the local body law. Party leaders claim that the fulfillment of the SC's decision is a contempt of court. Sindh government has not transferred power to the local government representatives as mentioned in Article 140 A of the constitution, the MQM-P leadership says. Holding local body elections in such circumstances would raise questions over the process, they added.

Weekly Roundup

PSX sheds over 1,000 points during the week

KARACHI: The Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) endured a tumultuous trading week as a combination of encouraging and discouraging news led to market fluctuation between red and green zones. Consequently, the market closed at 41,052 points, down by 1,089 points (or 2.58%) during the week ended June 24. The market commenced the rollover on a negative note due to uncertainty regarding the International Monetary Fund (IMF) programme. However, the sentiment turned positive when a Chinese consortium of banks signed a \$2.3 billion loan facility agreement, and the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) approved the second instal-

ment of Rs96 billion to the independent power producers (IPP) of the 2002 power policy.

Furthermore, Finance Minister Miftah Ismail announced that an IMF deal is imminent which also helped boost investor sentiment. However, during the last trading session, the government announced a 10% super tax on 13 major sectors as well as a 4% additional levy on banks, which caused the market to spiral and hit an intra-day low of 40,555 points. In other news, the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) reserves decreased by \$748 million to \$8.24 billion which put further pressure on the Pakistani rupee, which dipped to an all-time low of 211.93 against the

US dollar during the week, however, the announcement of the China deal helped the rupee recover some lost ground.

Other major developments during the week were: Oil and Gas Development Company discovered reserves in Sindh, Punjab, steel bar prices raised to Rs236,000 a ton, non-textile exports soar to \$11.2 billion, and the Federal Board of Revenue abolished a 2% additional duty on the import of edible palm. Meanwhile, foreign selling this week clocked in at \$2.39 million against a net sell of \$1.91 million recorded last week. Selling was witnessed in all other sectors (\$3.5 million), and banks (\$1.9 million).

1st phase

Sindh all set to hold LG polls today

All the required arrangements in this regard finalised

KARACHI: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has completed preparations for organising the first phase of local government (LG) polls in 14 districts of Sindh today (Sunday). 21,298 candidates will contest for 5,331 seats in 14 districts of Sindh, whereas, 946 candidates have been elected unopposed before the electoral battle. The total number of registered voters is 1,149,2680. The election commission printed 2,950,000 ballot papers for the first phase of Sindh LG polls. 9,290 polling stations and 29,970 polling booths have been established in the districts out of which 1,985 polling stations were declared very sensitive

and 3,448 declared sensitive. 120,682 election staff will perform duties in the local government elections tomorrow.

The Sindh government had finalised a security plan on Tuesday to ensure the law and order situation amid the first phase of the LG polls in Sindh. A total of 1985 polling stations have been termed very sensitive, 3448 as sensitive and 3291 as normal in 4 divisions of Sindh. Over 26,000 policemen will be deployed across polling stations to maintain law and order. The CM Sindh had said that the government would not compromise on security and Law and order. Carrying of any kind of weapons will be prohibited on the

polling day under section 144, the CM added. The CM ordered all commissioners to take all political parties into confidence regarding the law and order situation. All power feeders will also be advised to provide uninterrupted power supply on polling day, the CM added.

Murad Ali Shah added that cameras will be set up on police mobiles to monitor the proceeding on the polling day. The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has finalised arrangements for the first phase of the local government elections in Sindh's 14 districts. The polling will begin at 8:00am and continue till 5:00pm without any break.

PTI challenges NAB amendment law in Supreme Court

Imran Khan gives call for countrywide protest rallies on July 2

Our Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: PTI Chairman Imran Khan Saturday challenged the amendments made in the National Accountability Ordinance, 1999 by the government in the Supreme Court. The former prime minister filed a petition in the top court under Article 184 (3) of the Constitution. Last month, the government passed the National Accountability (Amendment) Bill, 2022, in the National Assembly and the Senate. The NAB bill has formulated a post-retirement procedure for its chairman, among other changes.

However, President Arif Alvi returned the bill unsigned even after its approval from both the houses. Later, on June 9, the government passed the law in the joint sitting of the parliament, however, it was rejected by President Alvi due to the "flaws in its implementation". But the amendments were turned into law as

the bill was passed by a joint sitting and if the president does not give his assent then the bill is turned into law within 10 days. In his petition, the PTI chairman said that the amendment has taken away the authority of appointing a NAB chairman and has given the responsibility to the current government which will "maneuver by the bulk of the holders of public office to assume control over and influence the impartiality of the NAB chairman."

Moreover, it states that the bill will "virtually eliminate any white-collar crime committed by a public office holder". Khan requested the Supreme Court to "adjudicate upon questions of great public importance with reference to the enforcement of fundamental rights of citizens under articles 9, 14, 19A, 24, and 25 of the Constitution. The former PM argued that the amendments made in NAO, 1999 were "person specific and as such, it is just and fair to protect the constitutional

and fundamental rights of the citizens of Pakistan."

It further stated: "The NAB may be asked to provide details of all such cases which relate to the prominent and influential holders of public office,

Super tax will bring storm of inflation: PTI chairman

specially regarding cases pertaining to offences of owning assets (movable and immovable) without means." Former prime minister and Pakistan Tahreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman Imran Khan has announced countrywide protest rallies on Saturday (July 2) against rising inflation and amendments in the NAB law.

Addressing a press conference in

Islamabad on Saturday, he said that the main rally will be held at Parade Ground in Islamabad on Saturday (July 2) while the protest rallies would also be held in other cities across the country including Lahore, Karachi, Multan and Faisalabad. Imran Khan said that everyone has to come out against this imported government not for him but for the future of their children.

The former prime minister said that the 10 percent super tax imposed by the coalition government on 13 major large-scale industries will bring a storm of inflation in the country. He said that with the imposition of 10 percent super tax, the tax on 13 major large-scale industries will reach 40 percent that would lead to the shutting down of many factories. The former PM said that the industries have started laying off employees after the imposition of super tax.

He said that the increase in diesel



price would affect farmers, adding that the incompetent government has also increased tax on salaried class. The salaried class was earlier given a tax exemption on an income

of Rs100,000 but the incumbent government has decreased the slab to Rs 50,000, he said. Imran Khan said that his government collected record tax revenue during its tenure, adding that his government didn't burden those who were paying taxes, while 43 million non-paying households were added in the tax net.

Regarding NAB law, the PTI chairman said that he has challenged the amendments in the Supreme Court, adding that he has confidence in the judiciary as it will not allow oppression. "If they [incumbent rulers] succeeds, the country wouldn't need enemies," he said and added these NAB amendments are going to destroy Pakistan as the big robbers will be exempted under NAB amendments. He said, "The rulers have dug the grave of the system of accountability to save themselves, adding that no one will be able to ask the person who bought the property with the plundered money."

Govt committed to transform Pakistan into knowledge society: Governor

The Governor Punjab inaugurates exhibition of works of art at the College of Art and Design

Our Correspondent

BAHAWALPUR: Governor Punjab Engr. Muhammad Baligh-ur-Rehman said that the government was committed to transform the beloved homeland Pakistan into a knowledge based society.

Universities are centers of higher learning that have a responsibility to prepare our students to face global challenges.

The governor expressed these views while addressing a large gathering of teachers and students at the Islamia University of Bahawalpur. During his visit, he inaugurated the new building of the Faculty of Computing at the Islamia University Bahawalpur.

The Governor Punjab inaugurated the rainy season tree planting campaign as well as an exhibition of works of art at the College of Art and Design.

In his address, the governor said that the schemes to promote education, including scholarships, fee waiver



er scheme and laptop supply program, have been immediately revived. The laptop scheme is in fact a great effort to expand the scope of research and quality education in the country and access to information technology.

He asked the students to turn their educational activities into finding answers to individual, regional and national issues. Just as the nation is

making sacrifices for their education, let them also contribute to the collective development and prosperity.

He said that the land of Bahawalpur and Cholistan was full of philanthropy and love of Khawaja Ghulam Farid. Bahawalpur has been a center of knowledge and civilization. Educational institutions had established national and international recogni-

tion.

The governor commended the recent achievements of the University including the provision of thousands of admissions, the extraordinary increase in the number of new faculties and teaching departments, the launch of programs tailored to market needs, significant progress in global rankings, development activities.

On the occasion, Vice Chancellor Engr. Prof. Dr. Athar Mahboob in his welcome address thanked the Governor for coming and said that all the achievements of the university were made possible by the hard work of the faculty and staff and the support of the government.

He said that the full support of Governor Punjab Muhammad Baligh-ur-Rehman and Chief Minister Punjab Hamza Shahbaz was very much appreciated for using the system of increasing rainfall with the help of modern technology to make the 6 million acres of Cholistan desert cultivable.

Exhibition

LAHORE: Visitors are taking keen interest in a painting during painting exhibition of Rukhsana Aslam at Coopera Art Gallery, in Provincial Capital.



Photo: Online

Karachi's COVID infection rate nears 20%

Sindh health department orders strict implementation of SOPs

KARACHI/ISLAMABAD: The coronavirus infection rate in the port city is nearing 20% after more than 200 fresh cases were reported in the last 24 hours, data from the National Institute of Health showed Saturday.

The positivity ratio reached 19.65% after the city registered 246 new coronavirus cases — following the trend of rising COVID infections across the country.

In Sindh overall, 3,336 tests were conducted in the last 24 hours, after which 280 cases were detected, according to the provincial health department. The province's positivity ratio stands at 8.4%.

After Karachi, Islamabad reported the most cases at 50. Positivity ratio: Karachi — 19.65%, Hyderabad — 11%, Islamabad — 4.04%. The overall positivity ratio in the country has reached 3.19% after 435 new cases were registered and a COVID-19-related death occurred in the last 24 hours, according to the NIH.

The NIH said 87 patients were in critical condition and are being treated in various hospitals across the country. COVID-19 has claimed the lives of 30,383 people in Pakistan so far. Since the previous high of 56 on September 30, 2021, fatalities have generally been declining.

According to the government dash-

board, the total number of cases in the country is 1,531,982.

In a letter to the Karachi and Hyderabad commissioners a day earlier, the Sindh health department expressed concerns about a sixth COVID-19 wave. The health department directed the commissioners to ensure that COVID-19 standard operating procedures (SOPs) were strictly followed in the two cities.

Mask-wearing, social distancing, checking of vaccination cards, and limiting public transportation occupancy to 70% are among the SOPs. The health department is concerned about the spread of the COVID-19 subvariants BA-5 and BA-4. Agencies

Weather to remain hot, dry: PMD

ISLAMABAD: Mainly hot and dry weather is expected in most parts of the country on Saturday according to the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD). The weather will remain hot and dry in Islamabad, Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Sindh, Balochistan. However, arly cloudy weather is expected in Kashmir and Gilgit Baltistan.

During the last 24 hours, hot and dry weather prevailed over most parts of the country. However, 01 mm of rain was recorded in Garhi Dupatta (Kashmir).

The highest maximum temperatures recorded during the period were Dadu, Mohenjodaro 46 C, Jacobabad, Sibbi, Mithi, Shaheed Benazirabad and Khairpur 45 C.

Security forces kill four terrorists in North Waziristan: ISPR

Raja Furqan Ahmed

RAWALPINDI: As many as four terrorists were killed by the security forces on Saturday during an Intelligence-based operation (IBO) conducted in area Dossali, North Waziristan District.

According to the military's media affairs wing (ISPR) news release, the terrorists were killed during fire exchange, whereas weapons and ammunition were also recovered from the killed terrorists.

The killed terrorists remained "actively involved in terrorist activities against the security forces," it further added.

10 candidates to contest by-election PP-83

SARGODHA: A total of 10 candidates, belonging to various political parties and independents are in the run to contest by-election PP-83 Khushab.

Talking to APP on Saturday Election Commissioner Sargodha division Amir Javed said that 10 candidates would participate in by-election and their documents were verified by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP).

He said that Amir Hayder Sankha from Pakistan Muslim league Nawaz (PML-N) Hassan Malik from Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), Zamurd Abbas Khan from Tehreek-e-labbaik Pakistan, Habibullah (Independent), Abdul Manan (Independent), Uzair Muhammad Khan (Independent), Muhammad Asif Malik (Independent), Muhammad Rizwan Aslam (Independent), Muhammad Noor-ul-Hasan, (Independent) and Malik Hamid Mehmood Tiwana (Independent) were the final short listed candidates according to the ECP.

PM to inaugurate CPR initiative to save lives: Salman Sufi

ISLAMABAD: Head of Prime Minister's Strategic Reforms Unit Salman Sufi on Saturday said that the logo of "PM Life Savers Team" under the National Initiative for CPR training had been issued.

In a statement, he said CPR training programme would be started across the country to train people to provide emergency resuscitation and save lives.

A citizen can become member of life saver team of the prime minister by registering himself with the local health department, 1122 emergency service or a designated hospital.

The person after getting training will pledge to train ten people in his neighbourhood.

The person who will train maximum number of citizens will be given a commendation certificate by the prime minister, Sufi added.

He said the aim of the campaign under the PM, CPR initiative was to make citizens capable of saving precious lives. The prime minister will soon inaugurate this training initiative.

ANF confiscates 130Kg of various narcotics items

PESHAWAR: Anti-Narcotics Forces (ANF) on Saturday confiscated more than 130Kg of narcotics contrabands from a truck and arrested two alleged smugglers in G.T.Road.

Acting on tip off, the team of ANF signaled a truck to stop near Tarnab Farm on G.T.Road and recovered 88 Kg of hashish and 43 Kg of opium. The contrabands were hidden in upper cabin of a truck.

Police also arrested two smugglers identified as Nadar Khan and Mohammad Nawaz on the spot.

Meanwhile, the Airport Security Force recovered 98 capsules filled with ice-drug which were hidden in the abdomen of a Bahrain-bound passenger.

The arrested identified as Janat Gul was trying to smuggle the contrabands to Bahrain.

The cases have been registered against the arrested and further investigation was underway. APP

13 cattle markets set up in Lahore

LAHORE: The district administration has set up 13 temporary cattle markets for purchase of sacrificial animals in the provincial capital and imposed a ban on setting up any point other than these spots.

Commissioner Lahore Division Usman Younis issued a directive for improving conditions of these animal markets and asked the authorities concerned to chalk out special traffic plan amid foolproof security for them.

Presiding over a meeting to review arrangements of animal markets here on Saturday, he asked the health authority to take steps against Congo virus which spread through animals.

The commissioner directed the Metropolitan Corporation Lahore (MCL) to make proper arrangement for lighting, parking and drinking water for visitors, saying that indiscriminate action against encroachments should be carried out time to time in the cattle markets.

Information desk of allied departments for visitor's assistant should be made operation as soon as possible, he added.

Around 13 cattle markets of nine zone of the provincial capital were set up at Shahpur Kanjira, Pine Avenue Road, Sundar Road, NFC Society, Raiwind Road Mangamandi, Saggian Road, Lakhodair near Ring Road, LDA City near Kahna, Gajumata, DHA phase-9 Block N, Vegetable market Nashtar Colony and others. Agencies

Conflict reporting conference kicks off at CEJ-IBA

Politicians, journalists, filmmakers, comedians talk about regulation, satire and the culture connection

Staff Reporter

KARACHI: The two-day conference on 'Extreme Reporting: Conflict and Peace in the Digital Age' held at the Centre of Excellence in Journalism at the Institute of Business Administration washed on Saturday with a keynote speech by veteran journalist Hamid Mir.

Mr Mir discussed how his career started and why it is important to groom young Pakistani journalists and teach them about journalism.

IBA's Dr S. Akbar Zaidi and CEJ-IBA's executive director Amber Rahim Shamsi welcomed the participants and speakers to the event.

According to Ms Shamsi, without political satire, without freedom of speech, without quality journalism, the world is a slightly nastier place. "Peace isn't just the absence of conflict, it's conditions where justice, equity, and harmony can flourish. Journalists don't broker peace that's the job of the politicians and frankly, they're not doing a great job of settling disputes themselves — journalists help those

seeking justice, and highlight inequity," she said.

"Meanwhile, social media has turbocharged the politics of conflict and populism. We live in a world where heroes are easy to manufacture and villains even easier to vilify. It takes a few tik tokkers and YouTubers. Like and subscribe to my channel, follow me.

"Besides, why promote harmony when polarization gets the access to the powerful, the fame, the clicks and ratings? I hope that's one of the many questions we can find an answer to over the next couple of days, and one of those questions is fundamental — why do we still need journalism when we can't even assume that people learn about the world through good journalism," she added.

Dr Zaidi said that he was delighted to be part of the conference which brings together Pakistan's best and bravest journalists talking peace and about the challenges they face in an age of growing conflict, from those related to control and regulations, to outright intimidation and threats.



Talking about conflict as a social scientist, Dr Zaidi said that in the social sciences, there is conflict in everything including the family — the hierarchy creates conflict and conflict can also have many forms.

Welcoming the participants to the two-day conference, Dr Zaidi said: "I hope there's a lot of conflict in your discussion and some resolution too."

The first day kicked off with a powerful session titled: do we need

journalism? Moderated by journalist Shahzeb Jillani, the powerhouse panel which included, Lok Sujag's chief editor Badar Alam, BBC's Zeeshan Haider and Geo's Benazir Shah.

The panel discussed the grim reality of the state of journalism in Pakistan and how important it is for the country now and in the future.

Mr Haider said that it wasn't a question about credibility but trust. "A user is now basing news preference

on if they like/dislike the person sharing the news (which is essentially their opinion). Verification of news or fact is secondary for them," he said.

For Geo's Benazir Shah while journalism is important and needed — the quality of what you read in the newspapers had gone down.

"The problem with consuming news on social media is that there will always be doubt — is this accurate and authentic? I get a lot of messages from my friends who will send me a link and ask if this is fake. There is also a misconception between a journalist and reporter. A reporter provides information and a journalist will provide it in context. There are a lot of layers in a media organisations which get eliminated in social media," she added.

According to Mr Alam, journalism does not exist in a vacuum. "Conflict is essential for what we do. The conflict Pakistan is facing right now is not being resolved in a democratic way and so journalism cannot survive in an undemocratic atmosphere. There is no real democracy in this country so journalism right now is distorted

and mutilated. If people don't trust the media, you can't blame them. Even within that, image in we have done good journalism and are still doing it," he said, adding that while the future of journalism might not be bright but was there.

The second session, Foes and Friends: Media Laws and Regulations promised to be an explosive session with former information minister Fawad Chaudhry, State Minister for Petroleum Dr Musadik Malik, journalist Hamid Mir and lawyer Zainab Janjua. The session was moderated by prime TV anchor and journalist Maria Memon.

State Petroleum Minister Musadik Malik had a very different take on the topic. For Dr Malik, the media and politicians are the same. "I don't think there is a difference. You can call them organisation, politicians, journalists — essentially they are all the same thing. They are the country's elite and they are shocked. Their responses are of shock or as they say frozen in shock, and they do not know how to respond," he said.



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Namaz Timings

Fajr 3:15 am
Zohr 12:10 pm
Asr 5:11 pm
Maghrib 7:22 pm
Isha 9:06 pm

EMERGENCY

Rescue (Police) 15
Bomb Disposal 15
Fire Services Rawalpindi/
Islamabad 1122 & 16
Emergency Ambulance 1122 &
& Rescue Services 4451122
Motorway Police 9266044
Motorway Police 9270601-20

Women Police Stations

Islamabad 9222596
Rawalpindi 9270601-20

ENQUIRY

Edhi Ambulance 115
PIA Flight Info 114
PIA Cargo 9280979
Railway Inquiry 117
Railway Exchange 9270831-5
WASA Rawalpindi 5555489
CAA 9281092

HOSPITALS

CMH 561111
MH 561116
MH 561116
Cantt Hospital 9270907-11
DHQ 5556311-4
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Holy Family 9290322-7
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Polyclinic 9218300-09
Shifa International 4603666

DEPARTMENTS

CDA 9221334-43
CDA 9208301-04
Met Office 9250360-6
RDA 5555864
TMA 5770886
Potohar Town 9209224
Rawal Town 5773343

COMPLAINTS

Water Tanker Service
E-7, F-10 & F-11 9204654
G-5, G-6, G-7, G-8, 9203883
G-9, G-10, G-11, G-12, H-8 9266316
Wapda Islamabad 9217579-80

Speakers for disseminating research on economic coop b/w Turkey, Pakistan

NUST and Ankara Centre of Thought and Research hold conference

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: NUST and Ankara Centre of Thought and Research (ADAM-ACTR) joint conference on Economic, Social and Political Relations between Turkey and Pakistan held here on Saturday.

The main themes of the conference are based on the History of Turkey-Pakistan relations; Economic, financial, commercial, and international cooperation opportunities; the Role of Islamic Economics and Finance on Development, and the Social and Cultural Relations between Pakistan and Turkey.

The Pro Rector (Research, Innovation & Commercialization) NUST Dr Rizwan Riaz welcomed guests and opened the conference with a welcoming speech. He expressed how crucial the relations between the two countries are, by saying "Turkey is our brother country". Right after Dr Rizwan's speech, Prof. MehmatBulut (President of Ankara centre of thought & research) stated that in recent years Turkey has increased its activity, both in its own geography, but also in the status of countries that are far from the region but not developed economically. South-Asia is at the forefront of geographical areas where Turkey has increased its activity outside the region. He added that Pakistan with a serious Muslim population in order to determine the current economic situation in South Asia especially in Pakistan where Turkey's new foreign policy statement corresponds, to take lessons from history and to photograph the future vision with new economic cooperation possibilities.



Moreover, Turkish Charge de Affairs in Pakistan Ms Esra Sen highlighted that universities associated with ADAM-ACTR will have an important pool of resources at the academic dimension to produce policies that will trigger regional development and growth. He added that forging of bilateral relations between Pakistan and Turkey can be traced back to the time of British India before Pakistan was born but the Pakistan Movement was well underway.

The speakers at the conference provided a roadmap to stimulate and disseminate new research on economic cooperation between Turkey and Pakistan. They added that in the last few years, the perceptions and interests of Turkey and Pakistan have started to converge on a number of important issues. For over half a century, Turkey and Pakistan remained close friends. Their multidimensional relationship showed the same spirit of brotherhood as prevailed during centuries old ties between Indian Muslims and the Ottoman Empire, later

the Republic of Turkey. Ideologically, however, they were poles apart - Turkey, when it became a Republic, pursued secularism while Pakistan adhered to the Islamic ideology as the centre piece of its nationhood. But these differences of ideology, with their corresponding reflections on their respective external outlook, never hampered the course of friendly bilateral ties. In future, there is hope that in keeping with the global trends, economic interaction will assume centre-stage in relations between Pakistan and Turkey.

They said a number of Pakistani students avail the Turkish universities scholarships but the ratio of Turkish students coming to Pakistan educational institutes is very low. There is a need for educational institutions to establish linkages. There is also a need to increase people-to-people contacts by exchange of cultural groups from both sides as well as encouraging the tourism industry to take the initiative in this regard.

Health Corner

Low Level Arsenic in Water: Low Birth Weight

ISLAMABAD: In the largest epidemiologic study of arsenic and birth outcomes to date, researchers from the University of Illinois Chicago and collaborating institutions estimated arsenic levels in U.S. private well water sources by county and compared estimates to documented birth outcomes. They found an association between estimated groundwater arsenic concentration and risk of low birth weight.

The findings, which are reported in the journal Environment International, suggest that efforts to reduce arsenic in private wells could help more babies be born at healthy weights, particularly in rural areas.

Arsenic is a natural element that, in some forms, is highly toxic when consumed through contaminated water used for drinking, food preparation or crop irrigation. All public water systems in the U.S. are required to monitor arsenic levels, but private wells — which are used by 14% of people in the country — are unregulated. As a result, there is limited comprehensive data on the extent of arsenic contamination and associated health risks in the U.S.

"While we have known that arsenic is dangerous, this lack of data on exposures from private wells has left some U.S. communities disproportionately vulnerable to adverse health events from the contaminant," said study co-author Maria Argos, associate professor of epidemiology and associate dean for global health at the UIC School of Public Health. "Developing a method to estimate these exposure risks was the first step in understanding the true exposure risk for all people living in the U.S."

Using several machine learning algorithms, the researchers characterized the probability that specific ranges of arsenic concentration occurred in groundwater sources in nearly all 3,000-plus counties in the conterminous U.S.

"These machine learning models are based on data collected by the USGS from over 20,000 private wells located throughout the U.S.," said Melissa Lombard, hydrologist at the U.S. Geological Survey, who is also a co-author of the study. "The models allow us to estimate arsenic in areas where there are no data. The development of the models was a collaboration between hydrologists and epidemiologists to explore connections between arsenic exposure from drinking water and human health outcomes."

Probabilistic model estimates and private well usage data were linked to all live birth certificates issued in 2016. The researchers compared the models to data on birth outcomes, which are tracked by public health departments, looking at gestational age and birth weight.

While there was no observed association in gestational age, there was an inverse association with birthweight, even at moderately low levels. The model predicted that counties with a higher probability of private well arsenic concentrations exceeding 5 micrograms per liter were associated with a birth weight 1.8 grams lower than average. Similarly, counties with a higher probability that private well arsenic concentrations exceeded 10 micrograms per liter — the standard followed by the federal government — were associated with a 2.8-gram reduction in birth weight, compared to average.

The researchers said the association they found is somewhat limited because the analysis was based on estimates of exposures rather than individual-level measured exposures, but the limitations of their model may be an underestimate of the true association. (Courtesy: Science Daily)



Development

ISLAMABAD: Labourers are busy in construction work with the help of heavy machinery for extension of Srinagar Highway during development work, in Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Admin launches operation against illegal hydrants

RAWALPINDI: The authorities concerned on the directives of Deputy Commissioner (DC) Rawalpindi Tahir Farooq on Saturday launched an operation against illegal hydrants and sealed 15 in different areas.

According to a WASA spokesman, Assistant Commissioner (AC), Saddar, Water and Sanitation Agency (WASA) Rawalpindi and Municipal Corporation Rawalpindi (MCR) jointly launched an operation against illegal hydrants and conducted raids in Adiala Road, Dahgal and Gorakhpur areas. More than 15 illegal hydrants were sealed while their motors and pumps were also confiscated.

WASA kicks off cleanliness work of 15 nullahs of Pindi

RAWALPINDI: Water and Sanitation Agency (WASA) Rawalpindi on the directives of Commissioner Rawalpindi Noor ul Amin Mengal on Saturday kicked off the cleanliness work of 15 nullahs of Rawalpindi, passing through different areas of the city.

According to Managing Director WASA Muhammad Tanveer, they had completed dredging and de-silting work of Nullah Lai and sewerage lines across the city. The Municipal Corporation Rawalpindi cleans the nullahs of the city

every year, but this year, due to delay in cleaning of the drains, there is a danger of urban flooding. The Commissioner Rawalpindi had ordered to immediately start cleaning work of 15 nullahs and Municipal Corporation Rawalpindi (MCR) had deposited Rs 35 million to WASA in this regard.

WASA Rawalpindi had also requested the Deputy Commissioner Rawalpindi to declare an emergency so that immediate action could be taken and the cleanliness work of 15 drains could be started.

He further informed that there are 15 small and big nullahs in the city, most of which fall in Nullah Lai. The MD said that WASA started the cleanliness work today utilizing heavy machinery.

It has also been decided to start the cleanliness work on all the drains at the same time so that the project could be completed within shortest possible time frame, he added.

The cleanliness work in Sadiqabad, Arya Mohalla, Zia Colony, Dhok Matkal and Kohati Bazaar has been started

while the work on the remaining drains would be started from Monday.

In view of the forecast of heavy rains in July, day and night work would be done and the project would be completed in one month, he said.

Due to shortage of funds, the work would be carried out particularly under the bridges of the nullahs and at specific places so that the obstacles due to garbage in these nullahs could be removed and the flow of water would be restored. APP

British Council organizes Pakistan Stories Film Screening

As part of Pakistan/UK: New Perspectives

ISLAMABAD: The British Council in collaboration with Patakha Pictures in Pakistan and the Scottish Documentary Institute in the UK organized a film screening event for "Pakistan Stories" at a hotel in Islamabad. Pakistan Stories seeks to support a new generation of female Pakistani documentary filmmakers to enable them to create engaging films that reflect on their society, and Pakistan's 75 years of independence.

The event celebrated the journey of the ten selected filmmakers through the programme. The filmmakers worked in pairs over a period of eight weeks and were mentored by experts in Pakistan and Scotland to develop and finance their creative skills so they could produce five short documentaries in a safe environment and reach new local and international audiences through their work. Important themes the documentaries cover include: early child and forced marriages, the rights of transgenders, women and disability,



women in education and the feminist movement in Pakistan.

Guests at the event included the British High Commissioner to Pakistan, Christian Turner, the Deputy Director of the British Council, Mark Crossley, filmmaker and founder of Patakha Pictures, Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy, the Director of the Scottish Documentary Institute, Noe Mendelle, as well

as top diplomats, senior government officials, journalists, leading experts from the arts space, and young aspiring artists and filmmakers.

The British High Commissioner to Pakistan, Christian Turner said: "Film is a brilliant vehicle for telling stories and giving women voice. With trailblazers like two-time Oscar winner Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy, and by combining the best of UK and Pakistan expertise, we can unleash the potential of the next generation of female filmmakers and women and girls across Pakistan."

The Deputy Director at the British Council Pakistan, Mark Crossley said: "The British Council is delighted to have enabled this platform for emerging female Pakistani filmmakers to hone their skills and tell stories about Pakistan as we mark its 75th anniversary with our Pakistan/UK: New Perspectives programme of activity. I look forward to these films being showcased across festivals in Pakistan and the UK."



ISLAMABAD: A health care professional team from Islamic International Dental Hospital on study tour visited The Diabetes Centre here on Saturday.

Planning Ministry to hold Turn Around moot on June 28

Strong economic discipline, management required for economic growth, says Ahsan

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Planning Development & Special Initiatives is all set to host Turn Around Conference (TAC) with an objective of gathering the nation together to find solutions to the country's current socio-economic issues.



These solutions would be aimed at short term results; if substantial these due deliverance compact ideas can be extended on to mid and long term objectives.

The conference will be held on June 28 at Convention Center which will be graced by Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif as chief Guest, according to a press release issued on Saturday by the Planning Ministry.

The prime objective of the conference is to engage all the relevant stakeholders which hold the development sector together from across the nation.

"The aim is to take input, understand and resolve hurdles in Economic Growth in order to place country's economy back on track", said the Federal Minister for Planning Development & Special Initiatives, Professor Ahsan Iqbal.

Currently, Pakistan is facing many external and internal challenges which are further compounded by the existing commodity super-cycle and geo-political situation. As the economic growth does not offer enough opportunities for national progress, short-term measures can act as a catalyst for speeding up the growth.

Current Socio-economic landscape of Pakistan calls for tactical solutions to address Economic problems. Hence, A quick round of wider and inclusive consultations of experts belong from diversified fields can be helpful in providing solutions to come out of this economic quagmire.

The government has already taken necessary short-term actions to stabilize the economy and deal with the looming balance of payments crisis. However, the government's focus is to ferret out the medium to long-term solutions to optimise country's economy to tap its full potential in line with Vision 2025.

Moreover, participation of stakeholders from all walks of life is ensured including representatives of Political Parties, Federal Ministries, Provincial Governments, National and International Private Sector Entrepreneurs, International Development and Financial Institutions, Academia, Think Tanks, Independent Experts, NGOs and other parts of Civil society of the country to produce result oriented and focused solutions for bringing a turnaround in the economy of Pakistan. APP

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The coming green hydrogen revolution

Jean Baderschneider

Human-induced climate change is causing dangerous and widespread environmental disruption and affecting the lives of billions of people around the world. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the world faces unavoidable climate hazards over the next two decades. But, with average annual global greenhouse-gas emissions reaching their highest levels in human history between 2010 and 2019, we are simply not doing enough to limit global warming to 1.5°C. The IPCC report released in April recommended that the world rapidly reduce fossil-fuel supply and demand between now and 2050: by 95% in the case of coal, 60% for oil, and 45% for natural gas. But how can we possibly achieve such ambitious targets?

The answer is by switching to green hydrogen, which can be produced from all forms of renewable energy, including solar, wind, hydro, and geothermal. Green hydrogen

is a zero-emissions fuel; when produced through electrolysis, the only "emission" is water. It is a practical and implementable solution that, by democratising energy, decarbonising heavy industry, and creating jobs globally, would help revolutionise the way we power our planet. A rapid acceleration of the green-energy transition can also fundamentally alter the geopolitical landscape, since countries will no longer be powerful simply because of the fossil fuels they produce. In 2021, Russia provided 34% of Germany's crude oil and 53% of the hard coal used by German power generators and steelmakers. Russian-piped natural gas was Germany's largest source of gas imports in December 2021, accounting for 32% of supply.

Since Russian President Vladimir Putin launched his horrific, unjust war in Ukraine in February, fossil-fuel exports to Europe have been earning Russia roughly \$1bn a day. But since the start of the invasion in February, European Union countries in particular have moved quickly to reduce their energy dependence on Russia, recently agreeing to ban all seaborne imports of Russian oil. These new sanctions against Putin's war machine could cut the amount

of oil the EU buys from Russia by 90% this year. The United States has declared a complete ban on Russian oil, gas, and coal imports, while the United Kingdom is phasing out imports of Russian oil by the end of 2022. These policies have sent fuel prices soaring. But sharply higher prices have also highlighted the opportunity to drive down energy costs by investing in renewables and the production of green hydrogen.

New research suggests that green hydrogen will be competitive with fossil fuels over the next decade. The cost of green hydrogen is expected to decline significantly by 2025 and to fall to \$1 per kilogram by 2030 in favourable locations such as Australia. For comparison, grey hydrogen, which is made using polluting liquefied natural gas, currently costs around \$2 per kilogram.

Some advocate using LNG to "solve" the current energy-security crisis, but "natural gas" contains methane, and the IPCC says that we must reduce use of natural gas by almost 45% by 2050; adding more to the energy mix now would be a catastrophic mistake.

So, there is now a global race for green energy, and specifically for green hydrogen. Dozens

of countries that have abundant renewable-energy sources can develop energy independence by producing green hydrogen at scale. And energy importers will not have to rely only on the few countries (such as Russia) that have a natural endowment of fossil fuels. In a recent report, the International Renewable Energy Agency said that (green) hydrogen can bolster energy security in three main ways: by reducing import dependence, mitigating price volatility, and boosting energy systems' flexibility and resilience through diversification. As technologies improve, the cost of green hydrogen will fall. We must do everything we can to accelerate this process.

Companies like Fortescue, where I am a board director, are investing significantly in green hydrogen and will help to replace Russian fossil fuels with green energy. Fortescue recently announced an agreement with Germany's largest energy distributor, E.ON, to supply Europe with 5mm tonnes of green hydrogen a year by 2030 – the equivalent of one-third of the calorific value of the energy that Germany currently imports from Russia. But while rapid changes in the energy and geopolitical landscape present a clear oppor-

tunity to address the energy and climate crises simultaneously by investing in green energy, there is a clear perception of unfairness when developed countries claim that relatively low-emitting developing economies need to shut down fossil-fuel use. Why should they risk slowing their development to address a problem they played no part in causing?

It's a valid question. Policy-makers will need to account for developing countries' interests during the green transition and enhance funding and incentives for them to move to clean energy as the basis of industrialisation. The world is clearly at a fork in the road. We can remain locked into a costly, polluting future that is hideously inefficient and empowers only a handful of fossil-fuel-rich countries. Alternatively, we can choose a green revolution of low-cost energy for all that keeps our future secure from pollution, global warming, and dictators. Given that green energy has the power to democratise global supply as more countries achieve energy independence, the choice is not difficult.

The writer is a non-executive director of Fortescue Metals Group. Courtesy Gulf Times

Iran nuclear talks

The European Union (EU) and Iran have shown willingness to resume stalled nuclear talks in the coming days. Talks between Iran and the major powers—Russia, United States, China, France, United Kingdom and Germany—over Tehran's nuclear programme have stagnated since March. A key obstacle to the discussions has been tension between US and Iranian officials, with each side blaming the other for the stalemate. The purpose of the talks is to revive the 2015 JCPOA pact, which placed limitations on Iran's nuclear programme in exchange for sanctions relief.

In 2018, then-US President Donald Trump pulled out of the deal and reimposed crippling sanctions on the country, despite broad Iranian compliance to its terms. Since then, Iran has reigned on a number of aspects of the deal, putting it into conflict with the US. Concluded by Iran and the six powers, the JCPOA aims to guarantee the civilian nature of Tehran's nuclear program, in exchange for a gradual lifting of sanctions that have suffocated the Iranian economy.

Iran has been accused of developing nuclear technology for atomic weapons—something it denies, insisting the technology is primarily for peaceful purposes. Head of EU diplomacy Josep Borrell, who has pushed to break the diplomatic deadlock, made the announcement with the Iranian foreign minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian at a press conference in the Iranian capital. The JCPOA appeared close to being revived in March, following 11 months of indirect talks between Tehran and the US under President Joe Biden, with the EU acting as a go-between. But they became bogged down over Tehran's insistence that Washington removes the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) from the US Foreign Terrorist Organisation. The IRGC is an elite security force in Iran, which has huge political influence and controls large sections of the country's economy. Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian has referred to his inclusive talks with the EU representative and said that Iran is ready to resume negotiations with P4+1 in the coming days. Speaking during a joint press conference after a meeting in Tehran with EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell, Amirabdollahian said that economic interests of the Iranian nation is of significance for the Iranian government.

The EU foreign policy chief, for his part, stressed the importance of his visit to Tehran. Borrell noted that his visit has not come to an end and there will be another meeting. He underlined that the main purpose of his visit to Tehran was to break the deadlock of a 2015 Iran nuclear deal (known as JCPOA) and to reduce the tensions.

Both sides are scheduled to resume JCPOA talks quickly within the next coming days, Borrell said. He said that he, as the JCPOA coordinator, prepared a number of proposals in March and raised a number of questions that had to be answered by Iran and the US. The talks need to be resumed and this is a decision that has to be made both in Tehran and Washington. Reaching a deal with Tehran in such a situation would be a crucial and historical accord for the entire world.

Borrell in a series of tweets announced a deal with Iran to resume nuclear talks. In meeting with Iranian Foreign Minister we agreed on resumption of negotiations between Iran and US in the coming days, facilitated by my team, to solve the last outstanding issues. Our bilateral relations have enormous potential but without a working JCPOA we cannot fully develop our relationship. Also raised urgent matters such as the highly disconcerting detention of EU citizens in Iran and asked for their release.

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Lausanne Treaty & East Aegean islands

Prof. Yucel Acer

The Lausanne Peace Treaty states in Article 13 that no naval base and no fortifications would be established on the Greek islands of Midilli (Mytilene), Sakız (Chios), Sisam (Samos) and Ahikerya (Nikaria). The Greek military forces in these islands would be limited to the regular contingent called up for military service, which would be trained on the spot, as well as the gendarmerie and police force proportional to the total gendarmerie and police force in the Greek territory. The first paragraph of the 14th article of the Paris Peace Treaty of 10 February 1947, signed between Italy and 20 victorious countries, including Greece, ceded the South Aegean islands — known as the Dodecanese Islands or the Twelve Islands — including the island of Meis to Greece. In its second paragraph, the article provides that "these islands shall be and shall remain demilitarized."

Greece started to militarize some of these East Aegean islands in the 1960s, first on the island of Rhodes and then Lemnos. Türkiye sent official objections to Greece on 29 June 1964 and 1 July 1969. In response to these notes, Greece stated that it complied with the treaties and did not militarize these islands, therefore, initially respecting the relevant treaties. In the 1970s, Greece began openly and officially militarizing the East Aegean Islands, citing a variety of reasons, including the 1974 Cyprus Peace Operation, the establishment of Türkiye's Aegean Army (4th Army), the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye's decision on June 8, 1995, empowering the government to take necessary meas-

ures to prevent the expansion of territorial waters in the Aegean Sea, and finally some of Türkiye's activities in the Aegean airspace.

Greece claims that the disarmament clauses have expired, and that Greece has the right to arm the islands in order to "defend the islands against Türkiye" in the sense of right to self-defense. Since then, Türkiye has consistently opposed Greece's arming of the Eastern Aegean Islands, saying that it is a clear violation of the international treaties. Eventually, on July 13, 2021, Türkiye sent an official letter to the United Nations stating that Greece is in breach of basic provisions of the treaties under which it acquired sovereignty over the islands, which, from a legal point of view, means that Greece cannot, vis-à-vis Türkiye, rely on its title under the same treaties for a maritime boundary delimitation.

The right to self-defense is defined in terms of an existing military attack rather than a future threat. Thus, Greece cannot legitimize its militarization acts on the basis of the right to self-defense as they assume Türkiye's statements and activities as signs of possible attacks rather than actual ones. The fact that Türkiye and Greece are members of NATO does not imply that their security and defense systems are integrated. If this was the case, Greece would be unable to refer to any "Turkish threat." On the contrary, militarized Greek islands, the majority of which are just a few kilometers off the Turkish mainland coasts could pose a threat to Türkiye by providing a base for military wiretapping and digital operations using developing technology.

The fact that Türkiye is not a signatory to the 1947 Paris Peace Treaty does not mean it cannot raise the issue against Greece. The 1947 Paris Peace Treaty creates an "objective

regime", which establishes rights and responsibilities for all countries, especially for those whose interests are directly affected, like Türkiye. Article 60 of the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties, to which Türkiye and Greece are both parties, states that in the event of a material breach of a multilateral treaty by one of the parties, a party specially affected by the breach may invoke it as a basis for suspending the treaty's operation in whole or in part in its relations with the defaulting State. A serious breach occurs when a provision fundamental to the achievement of the treaty's object or purpose is violated.

The disarmament of East Aegean islands ceded to Greece could be considered critical to achieving the intent or purpose of the treaties that established that status. Both the Lausanne Peace Treaty and the 1947 Paris Peace Treaty were signed for the "preservation of peace." The Turkish delegation, which participated in the Lausanne Peace Treaty negotiations, also emphasized during the Lausanne Conference that the commitment to completely demilitarize the islands is necessary for a general peace. Greece's militarization of the islands contradicts the Lausanne Peace Treaty's object and purpose. Therefore, Türkiye is justified in arguing that Article 12 of the Lausanne Peace Treaty, which governs the title to these islands, might be suspended by Türkiye and renegotiated if the islands are not demilitarized and kept that way. These findings suggest that Greece's violation of the regulations may entitle Türkiye to suspend the Lausanne Peace Treaty's article regulating the sovereignty over the islands.

The writer is an expert on international law at the Ankara-based think-tank SETA Foundation. Courtesy AA

NATO's chance to chart a new path for its future

Luke Coffey

NATO leaders will meet in Madrid next week at a crucial time for the transatlantic alliance. It will be their first summit since Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February and NATO's defeat and withdrawal from Afghanistan last year. The main focus of the meeting will be Ukraine. Russia's invasion has completely altered the geopolitical landscape of the transatlantic community. The consequences of this war will not be fully felt or understood for years. The alliance will want to take steps to deal with the fallout from the conflict and to prepare for new security challenges in the future. Also, considering the fragile security situation in Europe, it will be very important for all 30 NATO members to show cohesion and unity.

While some who have cozy economic relations with Russia have caused some bumps in the road for the alliance, for the most part NATO members have been unified in their response to Russia.

So as the war rages, there are four issues that will dominate the agenda at the summit. First and foremost is agreeing on ways to help Ukraine while deterring further aggression in eastern Europe. Since Russia invaded, many NATO members have stepped up to the plate to provide weapons and ammunition. They have also deployed forces to eastern Europe to bolster the alliance's flank there. However, some have done more than others. Poland and the UK have contributed billions of dollars' worth of equipment to the Ukrainians. Smaller countries such as Estonia are the biggest providers of weapons and military assistance on a per capita basis. But Germany, Europe's largest economic power, has under-delivered on military support.

Although it is 40 pages long, the words "pandemic" and "China" do not appear. Of course, Russia will be the main focus of the new document, but it will be equally interesting to see how other issues such as China and engagement with the Middle East will be

addressed. Third will be Sweden and Finland's NATO membership application. In the aftermath of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the two Nordic countries have formally applied to join the alliance. This is a historic moment in European security matters. Both countries possess robust military capabilities and decades of experience working as partners with NATO. For historical and political reasons they have remained militarily non-aligned, but their partnerships with NATO are currently the closest of any nonmember states and the close relations go back decades. However, Turkey has been hesitant to support their applications for membership and any addition of new members requires unanimity.

Ankara has legitimate concerns about members of the outlawed Kurdish separatist PKK group being protected in Sweden. It is likely that this issue will eventually be resolved, but it will take time. Expect it to be hotly debated behind closed doors. Finally, as always, spending will be on the agenda. As an inter-governmental security alliance, NATO is only as strong as its member states. At the 2014 summit in Wales, they recommitted to spending 2 percent of GDP on defense by 2024. Since then, NATO defense spending has steadily risen, particularly since Russia's first invasion of Ukraine in 2014. In 2021, eight members hit the benchmark of spending 2 percent of GDP on defense (in 2014 only three did so). Russia's invasion has been a wake-up call, and several more NATO members are expected to hit the benchmark soon.

Since its creation in 1949, NATO has done more than any other organization to promote democracy, peace and security in Europe and the broader transatlantic community. Ensuring that NATO can face the challenges of the 21st century while being able to support Ukraine in its time of need will be the main challenge of the meeting. The Madrid summit offers an important chance for NATO's leaders to chart a path for the future. They should not squander this opportunity.

The writer is the director of the Douglas and Sarah Allison Center for Foreign Policy at the Heritage Foundation. Courtesy Arab News

Ukraine troops 'almost left' Sievierodonetsk

Ukraine says Russia launches widespread shelling

KYIV: Ukrainian troops have "almost left" Sievierodonetsk after weeks of intense fighting against Russian forces, the mayor of the eastern city said on Saturday, signalling the biggest reversal for Ukraine since losing the port of Mariupol in May.

As Europe's biggest land conflict since World War Two entered its fifth month, a volley of Russian missiles also rained down on military facilities in western and northern Ukraine and on a southern city, Ukrainian officials said.

Russian President Vladimir Putin sent tens of thousands of troops over the border on Feb. 24, unleashing a conflict that has killed thousands and uprooted millions. It has also stoked a global energy and food crisis.

Since abandoning an early advance on the capital Kyiv in what it called a "special military operation", Russia and its proxies have shifted their main focus to the Donbas, an eastern territory made up of Luhansk and Donetsk provinces.

The retreat from Sievierodonetsk, if

confirmed, would bring Moscow close to full control of Luhansk, with Ukrainian troops in the province largely holding out only in Sievierodonetsk's twin city Lysychansk, across the Siverskiy Donets river.

"Unfortunately, they have almost left the city," Mayor Oleksandr Stryuk said on national television. He did not confirm whether a full withdrawal was underway after regional authorities said on Friday that Ukraine was set to withdraw its troops from there.

Russia's pro-Kremlin Izvestia newspaper said one of its correspondents had arrived in the Azot industrial zone of Sievierodonetsk, where Ukrainian forces had been making a stand in recent weeks.

Ramzan Kadyrov, the head of Russia's Chechnya region which has troops fighting alongside regular Russian army units in Ukraine, said on social media on Saturday that Sievierodonetsk's industrial zone and airport had been "fully liberated".

The capture of Sievierodonetsk

would be likely to be seen by Russia as vindication for its switch from its early, failed attempt at "lightning warfare" to a slower grinding offensive which relies more on long-range shelling.

Moscow has recognised Luhansk and Donetsk as independent countries and demanded Ukraine cede the entire territory of the two provinces to separatist administrations.

Kharatin Starskiy, the press officer of a Ukrainian National Guard brigade, said on television on Saturday that the flow of information about the withdrawal from Sievierodonetsk had been delayed to protect troops on the ground.

"During the last (several) days, an operation was conducted to withdraw our troops," Starskiy said.

Serhiy Gaidai, governor of the Luhansk region, said Russian forces had attacked Sievierodonetsk's industrial zone on Friday and also attempted to enter and blockade Lysychansk.

Elsewhere in Ukraine, governors of western and northern regions report-

ed multiple missile attacks, indicating that Russia was not limiting its assault to eastern territories.

"48 cruise missiles. At night. Throughout whole Ukraine," Ukrainian presidential adviser Mykhailo Podolyak said on Twitter. "Russia is still trying to intimidate Ukraine, cause panic and make people be afraid."

The governor of Lviv region in western Ukraine, Maxim Kozlytskyi, said in a video posted online that six missiles were fired from the Black Sea at the Yavoriv base near the border with Poland. Four hit the target but two were destroyed.

In the north, Vitaliy Bunehko, governor of the Zhytomyr region, said strikes on a military target killed at least one soldier, adding that nearly 10 missiles had been intercepted and destroyed.

In the south, Oleksandr Senkevych, mayor of Mykolaiv near the Black Sea, said five cruise missiles hit the city and nearby areas on Saturday. The number of casualties was being clarified.

Turkmenistan sends humanitarian aid to Afghanistan



Spokesman Report

ASHGABAT: A humanitarian cargo sent from Turkmenistan to Afghanistan in connection with the devastating earthquake that occurred recently in the Afghan provinces of Khost and Paktika arrived in Kabul on Saturday.

This action was carried out in accordance with the Order of the President of Turkmenistan, who immediately responded to the natural disaster that befell the fraternal people. Turkmenistan sent 24,700 tons of cargo, including food, medicines, hygiene products, household essentials.

Sending humanitarian aid to the Afghan people is one of the components in the implementation of systemic comprehensive support to Afghanistan by the Turkmen state for many years.

Biden signs landmark gun measure

WASHINGTON: President Joe Biden on Saturday signed the most sweeping gun violence bill in decades, a bipartisan compromise that seemed unimaginable until a recent series of mass shootings, including the massacre of 19 students and two teachers at a Texas elementary school.

"Time is of the essence. Lives will be saved," he said in the Roosevelt Room of the White House. Citing the families of shooting victims he has met, the president said, "Their message to us was, 'Do something.' How many times did we hear that? 'Just do something. For God's sake, just do something.' Today we did."

The House gave final approval Friday, following Senate passage Thursday, and Biden acted just before leaving Washington for two summits in Europe. "Today we say, 'More than enough,'" Biden said. "It's time, when it seems impossible to get anything done in Washington, we are doing something consequential."

The legislation will toughen background checks for the youngest gun buyers, keep firearms from more domestic violence offenders and help states put in place red flag laws that make it easier for authorities to take weapons from people adjudged to be dangerous.

The president called it "a historic achievement." Most of its \$13 billion cost will help bolster mental health programs and aid schools, which have been targeted in Newtown, Connecticut, and Parkland, Florida, and elsewhere in mass shootings.

Shanghai declares victory over COVID

SHANGHAI/BEIJING: Beijing on Saturday said it would allow primary and secondary schools to resume in-person classes and Shanghai's top party boss declared victory over COVID-19 after the city reported zero new local cases for the first time in two months.

The two major cities were among several places in China that implemented curbs to stop the spread of the omicron wave during March to May, with Shanghai imposing a two month-long city-wide lockdown that lifted on June 1.

The efforts, part of China's adherence to a zero-COVID policy that aims to eradicate all outbreaks, have brought case numbers down but many of the heavy-handed measures have fueled anger and even rare protests and taken a heavy toll on the economy.

Beijing shut its schools in early May and asked students to move to online learning amid a spike in locally transmitted COVID cases. Senior year students at middle and high schools were allowed to return to classrooms from June 2.

Peace in IIOJK can't be achieved through force: Abdullah

SRINAGAR: In Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir, National Conference (NC) President, Farooq Abdullah, has urged the Narendra Modi-led fascist Indian government to shun its stubborn attitude and review its Kashmir policy as peace cannot be achieved through force.

Addressing party leaders and activists in Magam area of Badgam district, Farooq Abdullah deplored the Bharatiya Janata Party's the my way or the highway attitude. He said that the people in IIOJK, particularly the Kashmiri Valley, are paying a heavy price for the India's Kashmir policy.

The NC President said, while the Indian government and its air dropped administration in Kashmir is busy in its usual pomp and show, the people of the territory continue to suffer from rising unemployment, development deficit and inflation as never before. He maintained that all the democratic institutions in IIOJK have been diluted to fit in the vision of a particular political party and there is fear, anxiety, concern, and insecurity everywhere. Our people, particularly our youth, have been pushed to the margins, he added.

Farooq Abdullah said, the votaries of muscular policy in IIOJK need to take a step back and ask the Indian government if such a policy has succeeded elsewhere in the world. "The post 2019 policy landscape of Kashmir has no space for dialogue. It only relies on obliterating the legacy and icons of the region's constitutional and historical uniqueness. This has to change. There can be no headway without changing this. Peace cannot be achieved through force," he said.

UNODC Executive Director's message on Int'l Day Against Drug Abuse

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The harms of illicit drug use can affect anyone, but they often have the deepest impact on those in crisis. The pandemic undermined physical and mental health, strained healthcare systems, and disrupted drug treatment and services.

Instability from Ukraine to Afghanistan to Africa and beyond has increased the number of people in need of emergency assistance.

The industry of illicit drugs continues to ramp up during these challenging times. In 2020, more than 280 million people around the world used drugs. Seizures of synthetic drugs have multiplied in



the last ten years, while the opioid crisis in North America claims more lives every day, and non-medical use of tramadol continues to endanger people in Africa and the Middle East. Even as we work for long-term, sustainable solutions, there are people who need urgent access to treatment and care, now.

We need to reach those who are most difficult to reach, because they need

us the most: people in refugee camps and humanitarian settings; people at risk of being left behind as a result of the pandemic; and people facing barriers of stigma and discrimination. Women are among the foremost victims of conflict and crisis, and they often face greater barriers to treatment for drug use disorders.

In some parts of the world, the proportion of women among treated patients is

below ten per cent. We need to ensure access to care for all, including in emergencies. We also need to ensure that controlled medicines are available for pain relief around the world, and in humanitarian settings.

At the UN Office on Drugs and Crime we are committed to providing care and support to the people affected by illicit drugs, no matter the circumstances.

Everyone has a role to play, from governments to civil society to individuals, in bringing the necessary attention and resources to this issue, and we stand ready to work with all of you. Let us show those who need us that we care, by providing the care that they need in these times of crisis.

Death toll at 73 in Bangladesh floods

DHAKA: The death toll from floods in Bangladesh rose to 73 with five people killed in the last 24 hours, officials said.

The disaster in parts of the country is deteriorating due to the onrush from upstream in India. Forty-nine fatalities were reported from drowning while the rest died in flood-related cases, including lightning strikes, snake bites, diarrhea, skin diseases and landslides. Millions are still inundated and stranded in remote areas as they wait with children and the elderly for relief items.

Rina Begum, 45, a resident of a remote area of Balaganj sub-district in the northeastern border district of Sylhet, has been living at the house of a neighbour with her five children.

The widow left her mud house more than a week ago. "I haven't had any material relief until now. There is no way to move from here to any nearby shelter as the communication system has fully collapsed," Begum told Anadolu Agency with the help of a mobile phone of a relative.

Like Begum, hundreds of thousands of people in flood-hit remote areas have been stranded for more than a week without relief. Mohammad Shajahan, 40, has been stranded in another remote part of Balaganj with his three daughters in his mud house which is at risk of being washed away.

"Is it our sin to give birth in this area in a poor family?" Shajahan asked while speaking to Anadolu Agency.



Deputy Commissioner of Sylhet, Md. Mojibur Rahman, told Anadolu Agency that the government has allocated ample relief items for affected people. But due to the communication disruption, some stranded in the remote areas could not be reached.

"We have allocated 1,400 metric tons of rice and hand cash of 270 million Bangladeshi Taka (\$3 million) and 13,000 packets of dry food only for Sylhet district. All other affected districts have been provided almost the same," said Rahman. He said officials could not reach distant areas due to the depth of floodwaters and a complete disruption of communication.

"Today we visited a remote area in Balaganj. Some people came to us crossing waist-deep water. We did not get down anywhere in the area as there

was no dry land," he said.

The worst flood in the 100 years in the country's northeastern region has improved slightly in parts but is still deteriorating in others.

"The water level in the River Surma is slightly decreasing while the water in Kushiara part is increasing due to the flow of water coming from upstream Barak River of India," said Rahman.

The River Barak, a major river in India, has flown through the states of Manipur, Nagaland, Mizoram and Assam and entered Bangladesh from the northeastern border.

To date, the worsening floods have affected 13 districts in Bangladesh, marooning huge croplands and affecting life for millions of people — many of whom experienced another massive flood last month.

UK PM vows to lead Conservatives to next election

KIGALI: British Prime Minister Boris Johnson vowed on Saturday to lead his Conservative party into the next national election, which could be more than two years away, despite two bruising by-election defeats that have led to renewed calls for him to quit.

Earlier this month, Johnson survived a vote of confidence by Conservative lawmakers, though 41 percent of his parliamentary colleagues voted to oust him, and he is under investigation by a committee over whether he intentionally misled parliament.

On Friday, Conservative candidates lost two elections to the House of Commons held to replace former Conservative incumbents who had to step

down, one after being convicted of sexual assault and the other for watching pornography in parliament.

The election defeats suggest the broad voter appeal which helped Johnson win the 2019 election may be fracturing after a scandal over illegal parties held at Downing Street during coronavirus lockdowns.

Fears that Johnson could have become an electoral liability may prompt lawmakers to move against him, at a time when millions of Britons are struggling with rising food and fuel prices.

However, Johnson said he did not expect to face another internal challenge from within his party.

When asked on the final day of a trip to Rwanda for a Commonwealth summit if he would fight another confidence vote, Johnson told reporters: "What? We just had one of those things and I'm very happy to have got a bigger mandate from my parliamentary party than I got in 2019."

Asked if he felt the question of his leadership was settled, the prime minister said: "Yes." Under existing party rules, Johnson's leadership cannot be formally challenged again for another year.

Asked if he would lead the Conservatives into the next election, which is due no later than December 2024, Johnson

said: "Will I win? Yes." Johnson blamed the by-election defeats partly on months of media reporting of lockdown parties at the heart of government.

"I think that actually people were fed up of hearing about things I had stuffed up, or allegedly stuffed up, or whatever, this endless, completely legitimate, but endless churn of news," he said.

Earlier on Saturday, Johnson told BBC radio he rejected the notion that he should change his behavior. "If you're saying you want me to undergo some sort of psychological transformation, I think that our listeners would know that that ... is not going to happen."



Johnson's explanation for the defeat may do little to ease frustration in the Conservative Party. A wave of resignations by senior ministers might force Johnson out before the next national

election. The party's chairman, Oliver Dowden, quit after the by-election defeats.

Former Conservative leaders Michael Howard and William Hague are the latest senior party

figures to call for Johnson to go.

Asked what his message was for Conservative lawmakers who fear they could lose their seats at the next election, Johnson said: "We have to focus on the things that matter to voters, get it right on the cost of living, the economy."

Johnson refused to comment on a report in The Times newspaper that he had planned to get a donor to fund a 150,000-pound (\$184,000) treehouse for his son at his state-provided country residence. The story comes months after his party was fined for failing to accurately report a donation which helped fund the refurbishment of his Downing Street apartment.

Sale of motorcycles, three-wheelers edged up in May



ISLAMABAD: Sale of motorbikes and the three wheelers edged up in May, 2022 to 148,002 units compared to the sale of 147,729 units in same month of the previous year, showing an increase of 0.18%.

On monthly basis, the sale reduced by 2% in May 2022, compared to sale of 151,705 units in previous month of April, 2022.

On average, the sale of motorbikes, three-wheelers also witnessed a decline of 3.9% as the sale fell from 1,747 million units recorded during July-May (2020-21) to 1.679 million units in same period of current fiscal year.

The latest data released by Pakistan automobile Manufacturing Association (PAMA), Honda motorbikes' sale increased from 1.182 million units in 11 months of previous fiscal year to 1.25 million units in same period of current fiscal year.

Similarly the sale of Suzuki motorbikes also rose from 22,085 units to 34,578 units during the period under review.

Likewise, the sale of Yamaha motorcycles also witnessed increasing trend as it rose to 21,496 units from 19,324 units in the corresponding year of last year.

Sale of Ravi motorbikes, however, plunged to 3,160 units in 11 months of current fiscal year compared to sale of 5,788 units during the corresponding period of previous fiscal year.

Sale of United Auto motorcycles also declined from 341,151 units to 248,670 units in 11 months of current fiscal year.

Road Prince Motorcycles' sale also witnessed a sharp decline of 35% as it plunged from 131,171 units to 84,251 units in Jul-May (2021-22).

Among three-wheelers, the sale of Sazgar Three Wheelers edged up from 13,723 units in Jul-May (2020-21) to 13,886 units this year.

The sale of United Auto Three Wheelers recorded a sharp decline as it plunged to 2,853 units from 6,194 units. Agencies

Airbus to set up China research center to boost innovation



BEIJING: Airbus will establish the Airbus China Research Center in Suzhou, east China's Jiangsu Province, to strengthen the company's footprint and innovation partnerships in China, the company announced Friday.

The Airbus and Suzhou Industrial Park signed a framework agreement on Friday on the establishment of the center. The new move by Airbus is aimed at reaffirming its long-term commitment to cooperating with and investing in China, according to Airbus China.

"China not only has a promising aviation market, but also has advanced technological advantages in many fields," said George Xu, executive vice president of Airbus and chief executive officer of Airbus China.

"Airbus hopes to jointly contribute to the high-quality development of China's aviation industry by taking advantage of the high-quality business environment, unique industry chain and talent pool here," Xu said.

The Airbus China Research Center is located in China's Jiangsu River Delta, one of the country's economic hubs.

It will carry out research work on advanced technologies, such as hydrogen energy infrastructure, advanced manufacturing, and the aviation industry's upgrading with digitalization and intelligence. It is due to start operations in 2023, said the company.

Established in 1994, Suzhou Industrial Park has attracted a dozen high-tech enterprises in fields such as AI, biomedicine, nanotechnology and intelligent manufacturing. Xinhua

Realtors demand early withdrawal of high taxes on real estate sector

Government should increase taxes for non-filers but avoid imposing more taxes on the filers

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Muhammad Shakeel Munir, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), said that the construction industry plays a key role in the economic development of the economy, but the government has hiked taxes on real estate and construction sector in the new budget that would badly affect business activities of this sector and prove more harmful to the economy. He stressed that the government should withdraw high taxes on realtors to save this sector from further troubles.

He said this while addressing a meeting of ICCI Real Estate Committee that was convened to discuss new tax measures on the real estate sector through the new budget.

Muhammad Shakeel Munir said that around 74 industries were linked with construction sector directly and indirectly and increasing taxes would slowdown the business of all industries of construction industry. He urged that the government should urgently engage the stakeholders of the real estate sector in consultation



to address their concerns on tax matters. He further said businesses in Islamabad should be allowed to remain open till 11:00 pm as has been done in Karachi, especially during Eid season. He further said that the government should ban lighting of all billboards at night to save energy instead of early closure of busi-

nesses and markets.

Muhammad Masood, Convener, ICCI Real Estate Committee said that the new budget has increased advance tax on property transactions from 1% to 2% for filers, capital gain tax has been raised to 15% and imposed 1% deem tax on deemed rental income. However, all these

tax measures would badly affect the business activities of the real estate sector and cause more unemployment. Therefore, he demanded that the government should withdraw all new taxes to save the construction industry from further troubles. He said that the government should increase taxes for non-filers but avoid imposing more taxes on the filers.

Zubair Ahmed Malik and Muhammad Ejaz Abbasi, former Presidents ICCI said that hike in taxes on real estate sector has jeopardizes its survival and added that the collapse of real estate sector would ultimately lead to the collapse of the overall economy. They stressed that the government should engage with the stakeholders of the real estate sector to save it from the negative impact of new tax measures.

Jamshaid Akhtar Sheikh Senior Vice President and Muhammad Faheem Khan Vice President ICCI said that the business community was not against the payment of taxes, but they should not be subjected to unaffordable taxes as it would cause the closure of businesses and increase joblessness in the country.

AJK govt presents Rs163.7b budget for FY2022-23

Abdul Majeed Tahir

MUZAFFARABAD: Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) government on Saturday presented its Budget for fiscal Year 2022/23 with a total volume of Rs. 163.7 billion out of which Rs. 28.5 billion have been allocated for annual development program (ADP).

Minister for finance Abdul Majid Khan presented the budget for coming fiscal year and revised estimates for current fiscal year in the legislative Assembly in the absence of opposition members who boycotted the session and protested in front of building against government's policies.

The estimates for recurring expenditures for next fiscal year have been shown Rs. 135.2 billion compared to Rs. 112.9 billion revised estimates of current fiscal year while Rs. 28.5 billion has been allocated for development expenditures compared to revised estimates of Rs. 22.8 billion for current fiscal year.

Total income from revenue for the next fiscal year has been estimated Rs. 36.5



billion including Rs. 25.89 billion from income tax and Rs. 10.61 billion in the head of other taxes.

The government will receive Rs. 74.32 billion in the head of variable grants, Rs. 25.13 billion in the head of state revenue, Rs. 700 million in the head of water use charges and Rs. 700 million as capital receipts (loan and advances).

The minister while elaborating the salient features of the next fiscal year budget said that 62 percent funds in ADP had

been allocated for 389 running development schemes while 38 percent was allocated for 263 new projects in the next fiscal year budget and 107 running projects would be completed during the coming fiscal year.

He told the house that 19 percent fund in ADP in the coming fiscal budget had been allocated for social sector, 12 percent for production sector and 69 percent for infrastructure development.

The minister announced 15 percent disparity allowance and 15 percent adhoc allowance on new pay scales of 2022 for government employees and 15 percent rise in pensions of retired government employees.

In ADP for next fiscal year, preference had been given to communication department with highest allocation of Rs. 12 billion while Rs. 3.3 billion has been allocated for housing and physical planning.

The minister said Rs. 2.17 billion had been allocated in ADP for next fiscal year for education department and Rs. 1.8 billion for health department.



KARACHI: A delegation of Consumer Association of Pakistan led by Chairman Kaukab Iqbal called on Sharjeel Inam Memon, Provincial Minister for Information and Transport. Saleem Khan, Zulfikar Haris and Manza Naem were also present on the occasion.

Faisal Subzwari pays recognition to seafarers community



ISLAMABAD: Senator Syed Faisal Ali Subzwari, who is also the federal minister for Maritime Affairs, pays recognition to the seafarers' community of Pakistan and the world over.

Minister for Maritime Affairs emphasized the importance of Seafarer's Day as it was celebrated to recognize the priceless contribution seafarers make to both national and international trade and economy, often at great cost to themselves and their families, said a press release here.

Minister for Maritime Affairs highlighted that the ability of shipping to offer economic and efficient long-distance transport of goods puts it at the center of the world economy and it cannot be done without

skilled seafarers. Hence, their importance cannot be ignored as they are the one who runs the global economy.

The minister further paid recognition to the Seafarers of Pakistan and stated that we need to acknowledge the hard work and sacrifices our seafarers make to contribute greatly to the national economy and provide both essential and basic supplies including food, fuel, raw material and manufactured goods to the country.

He further stated that their exceptional contributions during global pandemic also cannot be neglected.

'Without seafarers, the country would starve and could not function,' he asserted.

Emirates to operate extra flights for upcoming Hajj season

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: With the significant demand for air travel during Hajj, Emirates is deploying extra flights to ensure more connectivity for the scores of pilgrims making their way to the Holy City of Makkah. Emirates will be operating special flights to Jeddah and Medina during the upcoming Hajj season to carry pilgrims for this special period.

Emirates will be deploying 31 additional flights to Jeddah and double daily flights to Medina from 23 June to 20 July to help transport pilgrims to carry out one of the key pillars of Islam. These services will run in parallel with Emirates' regularly scheduled services.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has greatly expanded its Hajj participation this year to nearly a million pilgrims. This year, Emirates has seen strong demand for Hajj travel from Indonesia, Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Nigeria, Turkey, Egypt,

Ethiopia, Malaysia, the UK, US, UAE and Algeria.

The special services are available to travellers holding a valid Hajj visa. Pilgrims must also be under the age of 65, hold a valid vaccination certificate with a vaccine authorised by the Saudi Ministry of Health, and must also carry a negative PCR test done within 72 hours of departure.

Given the significance of the once-in-a-lifetime Hajj experience, the airline's teams have been working hard to ensure that every detail of the pilgrim's experience is aligned with the tenets of their faith.

On the ground in Dubai, Emirates has a special Hajj airport team to help manage check-in, transfers, and helping to facilitate a seamless and convenient on ground experience for Hajj pilgrims. Emirates has also set up dedicated check-in and transfer counters for Hajj passengers transiting in Dubai. For Hajj travellers having a longer layover in Dubai before continuing on to

Jeddah or Medina, dedicated teams are on hand to escort those groups and support them on all of their arrival formalities.

From the moment pilgrims step onto the aircraft, a range of initiatives have been planned in keeping with the values and traditions of the Hajj journey.

Extra provisions to accommodate Hajj traveller needs such as ablution cleansing rituals, unperfumed towels, advising passengers while en route to Jeddah about when they have entered Al Miqat zones (state of sanctity) and changing of Ihram robes through special PAs, and other arrangements have been planned to ease their journey and ready them for the rest of their pilgrimage. Emirates' award winning ice system will also feature a special Hajj video that covers safety, general formalities and information about performing the Hajj pilgrimage. Pilgrims will also be able to tune into the Holy Quran channel, in addition to other religious content.

Coal Energy: Myths and Facts

Need stressed for safely consuming Pakistan's vast coal reserves

Staff Reporter

KARACHI: It is high time that Pakistan should adopt a safe and balanced approach to exploit its vast coal reserve for power generation with the least damage to the environment to overcome energy shortfall without further burdening the economy.

This was one of the main recommendations of a seminar on "Coal energy: myths and facts" organised by the Citizens for Environment in collaboration with the Institution of Engineers Pakistan (IEP).

The speakers of the seminar noted that Pakistan's reliance on coal for electricity production had been much less than the global average for the same so this indigenous energy source should extensively be used to protect precious foreign exchange reserves that are otherwise constantly being spent to import expensive fossil fuels.

They highlighted that owing to global energy insecurity caused due to continuing war between Russia and Ukraine many European nations had been compelled to revive their decades-old coal-based electricity

plants to avoid energy shortages for their countrymen.

Engineer Sohail Basheer, IEP Chairman, said that indigenous coal reserves had been proven the cheapest energy source the world over after hydroelectricity.

He said the coal reserves in Thar could go a long way to make Pakistan an energy surplus country with least reliance on imported fuel for power production.

Dr Azim Akbar, an energy expert, said that Pakistan had one of the world's largest reserves of lignite coal that is largely untapped.

He said that in addition to power production the coal reserves in the country could easily be converted into liquid fuels and gas that is useful for a number of industries.

Dr Nuzhat Khan, former director-general of the National Institute of Oceanography, said that all over the world 40 per cent of electricity production was coal-based while Pakistan's reliance on coal for the same had been much less.

She said that all the relevant academic and research institutions



should join hands to do collaborative work to accurately determine Pakistan's coal footprint.

She said the exact determination of the national coal footprint would be helpful to adopt a safe strategy for exploiting indigenous coal reserves for power generation.

She said that Pakistan should adopt the latest clean technologies for coal-based power generation.

Rashid Usmani, an environmental consultant, suggested forming a committee comprising of all the relevant experts for adopting an effective

national strategy for consuming indigenous coal reserves of the country for power generation with maximum safeguards for the environment.

Zeeshan Liaquat of Pakistan International Bulk Terminal said the PIBT at the Port Qasim had the adequate capacity and full commitment to export Pakistan's lignite coal reserves for earning foreign exchange.

Faisal Iqbal Siddiqui, General Manager Technical, Sindh Engro Coal Mining Company (SECMC), spoke about the vast potential of Thar

Coal, and how SECMC has been able to exploit this vast natural energy source, and at the same time mitigate the environmental effects associated with coal-usage.

He also debunked the myth associated with the low quality of coal available at Thar reserves, and said the lignite available in Pakistan, and especially in Thar, is as good as anywhere in the world. Thar has the potential to solve the energy crises of Pakistan for ages to come.

A Question-Answer session was later held, where the audience debated and argued on various aspects of coal usage, handling and transportation, especially those occurring in the immediate vicinity of human habitat.

One question was raised regarding the underground gasification of coal, and what potential it has to solve the energy crises. It was stated that in the presence of tried and tested power generation through coal-power plants, under-ground gasification is a tricky method, which still needs more development to be able to match the power generation capacity of coal power-plants.

World Test Championship

Sri Lanka name squad for Australia Tests

Two-match Test series begins in Galle on 29 June

COLOMBO: Spinner Jeffrey Vandersay has been rewarded for his impressive performances during the ODI series by being named in the 18-member squad for the Test series against Australia.

Vandersay impressed in the 3-2 ODI series victory against Australia, picking up 5 wickets in four matches. He also posed a lot of trouble for the Australian batters, who were often unable to pick up his clever variations.

Other notable players from the ODI series who find a place in the Test squad include Kusal Mendis, Pathum Nissanka, Chamika Karunaratne, Dhananjaya de Silva and Niroshan Dickwella.

The squad will be led by skipper Dimuth Karunaratne. Pacers Asitha Fernando and Vishwa Fernando, who impressed during the Test series victory in Bangladesh also retain their places. Kamil Mishara, Kamindu Mendis



and Suminda Lakshan though failed to make the cut.

Apart from Vandersay, the other spin-

ners in the squad are Praveen Jayawickrama, Lasith Embuldeniya and Ramesh Mendis. Veterans Angelo Mathews and

Dinesh Chandimal are also included, as Sri Lanka will hope to seal a famous victory against the visitors on home soil.

The two-match Test series will begin in Galle on 29 June. The second Test will also be played at the same venue between 8-12 July. The series will be of vital importance for both sides, as Australia sit on top of the World Test Championship 2021-23 standings while Sri Lanka occupy the fourth spot.

Sri Lanka squad: Dimuth Karunaratne (c), Pathum Nissanka, Oshada Fernando, Angelo Mathews, Kusal Mendis, Dhananjaya de Silva, Kamindu Mendis, Niroshan Dickwella (wk), Dinesh Chandimal (wk), Ramesh Mendis, Chamika Karunaratne, Kasun Rajitha, Vishwa Fernando, Asitha Fernando, Dilshan Madushanka, Praveen Jayawickrama, Lasith Embuldeniya, Jeffrey Vandersay.

Shehroze Kashif is our national hero: Tariq Qureshi



Our Correspondent

LAHORE: Director General Sports Punjab Muhammad Tariq Qureshi said that world's youngest mountaineer Shehroze Kashif is our national hero and our youngsters must take inspiration from him; he said this during his meeting with Shehroze Kashif at National Hockey Stadium on Saturday.

Shehroze Kashif, who is also Sports Board Punjab's Goodwill Ambassador, will leave to scale famous peaks—Nanga Parbat, Gasherbrum-1 and Gasherbrum-2 in a few days' time.

Shehroze, who has so far climbed 7 out of the 14 highest peaks in the world, expressed his confidence to scale the remaining top peaks in near future.

Director General Sports Punjab Muhammad Tariq Qureshi said Shehroze is an asset of our country, who waved the Pakistan flag on the world's highest peaks several times. "Shehroze is a true role model for the younger generation," he added.

Director General Sports Punjab Muhammad Tariq Qureshi said Shehroze really did immense hard work and learned the techniques and skills of mountaineering at such a young age. "We are quite hopeful that Shehroze will annex many more accolades for the country in future," he anticipated.

IBA excluded from 2024 Paris Olympics

LAUSANNE: Boxing's corruption-tainted world governing body will once again be excluded from organising their own events at the 2024 Olympics in Paris, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) confirmed on Friday.

The International Boxing Association (IBA) had already been barred from the 2020 Olympics in Tokyo with the organisation's presence in the 2028 Los Angeles Games also uncertain. "In the interest of the athletes and the boxing community, the IBA will not be running qualifications and Olympic events," IOC sports director Kit McConnell told a press conference. Boxing will take place at Paris 2024 but McConnell said the Olympic organisation remained "very concerned by the governance, the refereeing and judging process and the finances" of the amateur boxing body.

The recent re-election of IBA president, the Russian Umar Kremlev, has been called into question by the Court of Arbitration for Sport and the IOC are also concerned about "its financial dependency" on the giant Russian gas company Gazprom. Many Olympic boxing tournaments have been tainted by suspicions of corruption of judges and referees, from the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens to the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio.

The IOC will decide "in due time" on the terms of organisation of boxing in Paris, "by working closely with the organising committee and the representatives of the athletes", McConnell added. Although boxing, which made its Olympic bow in St Louis in 1904, is guaranteed to be on the Paris 2024 programme, its presence at the Los Angeles 2028 Olympics is still in the balance. "We've been looking for clarity from the IBA for many years," said McConnell. "The (IOC) board felt enough was enough."

Kvitova to face Ostapenko in Eastbourne final

EASTBOURNE: Petra Kvitova will play fellow former Grand Slam champion Jelena Ostapenko in the final of the Wimbledon warm-up event at Eastbourne. Kvitova is a two-time Wimbledon winner looking to emulate her All England Club triumphs in 2011 and 2014.

The 32-year-old Czech may not be at her peak these days, but she remains a force on grass, as she showed by battling to a 7-6 (7/5), 6-4 victory over the obdurate Beatriz Haddad Maia in Friday's semi-finals. World number 31 Kvitova ended the lengthy winning streak of Brazilian Haddad Maia to return to the final at Devonshire Park for the first time since finishing runner-up 11 years ago.

In a tussle between big-hitting left-handers, Kvitova avenged last week's defeat to Haddad Maia at Birmingham. Haddad Maia, whose memorable grass-court season included titles at Nottingham and Birmingham, was beaten for the first time in 13 matches. Kvitova, who lost to Marion Bartoli in the 2011 Eastbourne final, takes on former French Open champion Ostapenko in Saturday's final.

The Latvian is the defending Eastbourne champion and she remains on course for another title on the south-coast lawns after crushing Italy's Camila Giorgi 6-2, 6-3 earlier on Friday.

Eighth seed Ostapenko, the 2017 winner at Roland Garros, is also through to the Eastbourne doubles final with her Ukrainian partner Lyudmyla Kichenok. They will face Aleksandra Krunic and Magda Linette as Ostapenko chases two titles in one week. In the men's singles final, 2019 Eastbourne winner Taylor Fritz faces France-born American Maxime Cressy. American world number 14 Fritz defeated reigning champion Alex De Minaur 6-1, 6-7 (5-7), 6-3. Cressy, the world number 60, beat Jack Draper 7-6 (7/5), 6-7 (2/7), 6-3 to make it three wins over British players in this year's tournament.

Lahore Qalandars conduct orientation ceremony

Tahir Amin Malik

LAHORE: Lahore Qalandars, the Champions of PSL7 and the most favorite franchise of the Pakistan Super League (PSL) conducted an orientation ceremony for the class of 2022, Akhuwat a non-profit organization and Starlet a footwear brand were present during the orientation ceremony at Qalandars High Performance (QHPC) on 24th June 2022.

Lahore Qalandars management along with Akhuwat and Starlet distributed the kits to the players in an orientation ceremony. Furthermore, the management of Lahore Qalandars announces the Scholarship holders of Akhuwat and Starlet which will get a scholarship of one year to train in Qalandars High Performance Centre in addition to that they will get technical and vocational education for their alternative career pathways from the Technical Education and Vocational Training Authority (TEVTA).

DCO of Lahore Qalandars Aqib Javed described how players were selected through different phases and explained the syllabus of cricket education along with their technical education and divided this one-year scholarship program into different parts



for better learning opportunities for players.

Dr. Muhammad Amjad Saqib the Executive Director of Akhuwat said, "we are grateful for doing this great cause to help the humanity in some other way, and by being part of this initiative we can open the doors for bigger opportunities, and working together is a great success for our nation as well".

CEO of Starlet Nadeem Sohail said, "we are very happy to be a part of Lahore Qalandars, it's just a small

contribution from our side to support this great initiative and we are hoping for the best outcomes".

Lahore Qalandars CEO Atif Rana added, "we are thankful that Akhuwat and Starlet are supporting us in the field of sports because there is a lot of young talent here and we can provide them a pathway and increase the possibilities of sports in our nation that people can take part in it, we hope that we can find the best players through this great initiative"

Roundabout greenway attracts thousands in Chengdu

CHENGDU: "Did you 'circle' greenway this weekend?" In Chengdu, capital of China's southwest Sichuan Province, the phrase has become a greeting for many sports-lovers. A 100km roundabout greenway attracted thousands of locals for cycling, running and walking, including 19-year-old Pakistani girl Noor Usman.

On a recent weekend, Noor Usman and her father, Usman Ali, just finished a whole round cycle. For most people, eight hours could finish the round cycle, and some could do that within four to five hours.

The 100km roundabout greenway is a part of the Tianfu Greenway system in Chengdu. It is built along the city roundabout expressway



with multiple scenic spots. It is the longest urban roundabout greenway in China at present, connecting 78 landscape Bridges and 121 ecological parks. Because the 100km greenway is circular, like a circle, people call completing the 100km greenway cycle "drawing circle".

The Tianfu Greenway experience has indeed been overwhelming. "For any enthusiastic cyclist, it offers immense landscapes

to indulge into. There are many parks on the way, we pass by many locals and learn the cultural behavior of our Chinese friends." Noor said.

"There are some really cool vending machines and small businesses who are selling pineapples, watermelon, noodles all along the Greenway... it's a really good facility to keep your sugar level normal while you're out for a long ride," Noor said.

Noor's younger sister Maha, 16-year-old, also completed a 100km circle with her parents. She painted a picture of the scenery along the ride way.

Noor's family came to Chengdu eight months ago with his father's working transference from Islamabad. Noor was a little worried

about the unfamiliar environment and the language barrier in the first days of living in Chengdu, the family became immersed in the local sports scene soon. "Thanks to the greenway, we quickly adapted to life in Chengdu and gained a deeper understanding of Chinese life, she told Xinhua."

The greenway immersed with rich consumption activities. According to local authorities, over 4.3 million people toured on greenway in Chengdu during the 7 days Spring Festival.

The Tianfu Greenway is about 5,327km along with 1,414 parks, and the goal for this greenway system is 16,900km in future. Living in a garden like city is unique green experience.

Serena to face Tan in Wimbledon opener

LONDON: Serena Williams has been drawn to face French debutant Harmony Tan in the first round of Wimbledon as the American star returns to singles action after a year away.

Defending men's champion Novak Djokovic begins his quest for a seventh title – and fourth in a row – against South Korea's Kwon Soon-woo, ranked 75th in the world. The early focus at the All England Club will be on 23-time Grand Slam singles champion Williams, who has dropped to 1,204th in the world rankings and is unseeded for the tournament, which starts on Monday.

The 40-year-old, who took part in the doubles in Eastbourne this week, has not played singles since she suffered an injury during her first-round match at Wimbledon 12 months ago. Williams's preparations for the Grand Slam suffered a blow after her doubles partner Ons Jabeur withdrew from the Eastbourne tournament because of a knee injury on Thursday. The American won the last of her seven Wimbledon singles titles in 2016 but reached the final in 2018 and 2019 after returning from having a baby. Wimbledon is widely considered Williams's best chance of claiming a 24th Grand Slam singles crown to equal Margaret Court's all-time record.

The last of her Grand Slam singles titles came at the Australian Open in 2017. Speaking after Wednesday's doubles match, Williams had said: "I feel good – as good as one can feel after having such a long time off." Women's top seed Iga Swiatek, who has won her past six tournaments, including the French Open, was pitted against Croatian qualifier Jana Fett in Friday's draw. Romanian 16th seed Simona Halep, who has not played at Wimbledon since winning the 2019 title, has a tough opener against Czech player Karolina Muchova. Britain's Emma Raducanu will take on Belgium's Alison Van Uytvanck, providing the US Open champion has recovered sufficiently from a side strain. Djokovic, 35, is bidding to win his 21st Grand Slam, which would take him just one behind Rafael Nadal's record of 22 majors. It would also be his seventh Wimbledon title, taking him level with Pete Sampras and just one behind Roger Federer, who is not playing the tournament as he recovers from injury.

Second seed Nadal, 36, who is set to make his first appearance at Wimbledon since 2019 after winning the Australian Open and French Open this year, faces Argentina's Francisco Cerundolo. Britain's unseeded two-time champion Andy Murray, who is battling an abdominal strain, will play Australian James Duckworth.

With grass-court pedigree no longer counting towards seeding, French Open runner-up Casper Ruud is seeded third, Stefanos Tsitsipas fourth and Carlos Alcaraz fifth despite all still trying to get to grips with the surface.

Kerley throws down World Championship challenge

EUGENE: Fred Kerley clocked a world-leading 9.76sec in the semi-finals then followed up with a 9.77 to win the 100m at the US trials on Friday and stamp himself a favorite for the World Championships next month. Kerley's semi-final run, with a legal wind of 1.4m/sec, came a day after he posted a 2022 season-leading 9.83 in the heats.

The Tokyo Olympics silver medalist set a tone for the final and didn't disappoint. Although he didn't get off to as strong of a start, he powered through the middle section of the race to seize control and finish ahead of Marvin Bracy Williams and Trayvon Bromell. "My top-end got me to the finish line today," said Kerley, who added that he'd been "expecting some-

thing faster". Williams clocked a career-best 9.85sec and Bromell grabbed a World Championships berth in 9.88. Reigning world champion Christian Coleman was missing from the final.

He was a late scratch after finishing with the fourth-fastest time in the semi-finals. His semi-final time tied him for sixth-fastest all-time in the 100m – with Bromell and Coleman. Among Americans, only Tyson Gay and Justin Gatlin have run faster – but not on US soil. Kerley, who took 100m silver at the Tokyo Olympics behind Italian Lamont Marcell Jacobs, made it clear he was aiming to go higher on the all-time list, right to the top.

"Whenever I can get to Usain Bolt's record, that's what I'm aiming for," he said. Coleman's

2019 world title gives him a bye into the World Championships, to be held on the same Hayward Field track in July. He had said he planned to run every round as he continues his return to peak form after serving an 18-month suspension for missing drug testing appointments. But an hour and a half after the semi-finals, he was a no-show at the starting line for the final. The women's 100m final was also missing an expected star after Sha'Carri Richardson's shock exit in the heats on Thursday. Melissa Jefferson was the surprise winner in an impressive albeit wind-aided career-best of 10.69sec with Aleia Hobbs second in 10.72 and Twanisha Terry third in 10.74.

"It's kind of like, wow, did that really just happen," Jefferson

said of making her first World Championships team. She said "Wow" was her first response when she saw the time, then she saw the wind gauge reading of 2.9m/sec-above the legal limit of 2.0m/sec. Even so, she said the time showed her "that I can do it." It was a bounce-back performance for the 21-year-old, who finished eighth in the 100m at the NCAA collegiate championships earlier this month after winning the 60m at the NCAA Indoor championships in March.

World record holder and two-time Olympic gold medalist Ryan Crouser improved his own world leading performance in the shot put with a throw of 23.12m, with reigning world champion Joe Kovacs second at 22.87. Sandi Morris, a two-time



indoor world champion and twice runner-up at the outdoor

worlds, won the women's pole vault with a height of 4.82m – improving her own previous world leading mark of 4.81.

Vashti Cunningham won the women's high jump with a jump of 1.93m and Tokyo Olympics gold medalist Valarie Allman won the women's discus with a throw of 66.92m.

Seven-time Olympic gold medalist Allyson Felix made it into the 400m final to keep alive the chance of at least a relay berth at a one last World Championships before she retires. Felix's time of 51.32 was the seventh-fastest in the semi-finals, with Talitha Diggs leading the way into the final with a time of 50.88. "I just wanted to squeak into that final and just be ready (for relay duty) if they need me," Felix said.